



100 STRAY HORSES IN ROUND UP

Report by Richard Gutteridge

A TOTAL of 100 stray horses have been rounded up from streets across the Black Country over the past 12 months.

In the Sandwell borough 49 were seized from streets and fields, while in Dudley, 51 were taken away. It comes as a fresh crackdown is launched in Sandwell which could see owners fined up to £2,500 if their horses are found illegally grazing on open parkland and spaces in the borough.

New anti-social behaviour laws have been introduced by government ministers aiming to tackle problems in communities.

Councillors in the borough hope the legislation will help tackle the long standing issue of strays near homes and busy roads. They are keen to tackle the issue because of fears for the safety of residents and passing motorists.



Councillor Joanne Hadley

Mother in marathon for heart machine

A MOTHER-OF-FOUR is celebrating after completing the Brighton marathon to raise money for a new defibrillator at her children's school.

Jennifer White, 41, of Downing Street, Halesowen, completed the 26-mile course in a time of four hours, 33 minutes to raise money for the equipment for Newfield Park School in Halesowen.

She was inspired to raise money for the defibrillator after figures revealed that 12 children die from sudden cardiac arrest in a typical week in the UK.

The device delivers a shock to the heart of a cardiac arrest victim to enable the heart to resume its normal rhythm.

Her friend Maria Harris was also an inspiration as she had lost a relative to a cardiac condition.

Mrs White said: "I was really pleased with how it went and I held back at the beginning because I really wanted to finish it in style."

"I dedicated the last three miles to my friend because she has had a tough time this year. She was tracking my progress on the Brighton app and sent me a line saying, 'come on Jen, only three more miles to go.'"

Libraries are backing free book night

FREE books provided by a national charity will be given out by Dudley borough library staff as part of World Book Night next week.

The annual celebration of reading takes place on April 23 when hundreds of thousands of books are given away.

Deborah Harkins, chief officer responsible for libraries, said: "World Book Night is a great way of helping to inspire more people to read and for people to share their love of reading with others."

"Library staff will have a selection of books, provided by The Reading Agency, to give away, but we want to remind people that they can also borrow up-to-date titles from their local library for free."

Events in the borough include a special World Book Night at Mary Stevens Park, Stourbridge when books will be given out from 3pm. The Friends of Cradley Library will also be out in their community.

At Halesowen Library, quiz enthusiasts can pit their wits against other teams from 6.30 to 8.30pm. Tickets are free but need to be booked. Dudley Library will also be hosting a book-themed quiz on the night.

Over the past 12 months, 46 were removed from roads in the Sandwell borough, the council has said.

Last month bailiffs were called in to remove three horses which were found grazing on land at Weddell Wynd in Princes End. There were also reports of animals being tethered at nearby Coneygry Park.

Irresponsible

Councillor Joanne Hadley, who represents Great Bridge, is among those to welcome the use of new powers.

She said: "It is totally irresponsible to have these horses on the land and I fear there could be a serious accident if they get into the road. We are trying to regenerate these public spaces and we need to have something in place to help."

"If these areas are thought to be problem areas the council could use these powers." Across the border in Dudley, 51 were collected after police bailiffs responded to calls about the animals.

Areas plagued by stray horses have included Pens Pool nature reserve, Pennsett, and land around the Russells Hall estate, Dudley.

There have been many complaints about the animals on football pitches as well as planted and wooded areas being destroyed. Council chiefs spent almost £100,000 tackling horses grazing illegally on Dudley parks and nature reserves last year.

Dudley Council spokesman Phil Parker said: "We collected a total of 51 horses between April 2014 to present - 40 from the highway and 11 from public open spaces."

There are currently 127 people on the waiting list for grazing land to put their horses in the Dudley borough.

The figure has remained constant for five years. Sites are offered on a licence agreement. Seized horses are rehomed.

Taxi driver left me lying on the road



Connor Jones, aged 21, of Brierley Hill, suffered a broken leg after being knocked off his bike by a silver taxi in Springfield Lane, Rowley Regis

Screaming with pain

THE victim of a hit-and-run crash has revealed that he was left lying in the road screaming in agony.

Connor Jones, aged 21, of Brierley Hill, suffered a broken leg after being knocked off his bike by a silver-coloured taxi in Springfield Lane, Rowley Regis, and hurtling into a stationary Toyota Yaris parked on the other side of the road.

Connor, who works as a picker at M&J Seafood in Smethwick, was returning home from a night shift when he was struck in the early hours of April 4.

The taxi driver fled the scene after initially stopping to look at the stricken biker, leaving Connor lying in the road screaming in pain. "I remember thinking 'oh no'

when I saw the taxi in front of me, but I don't really know what I was thinking because it all happened so fast," explained Connor.

"I was shouting to get somebody's attention. I'd just been left screaming in the road."

Connor was taken to Russells Hall Hospital and has since been transferred to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham. He has had pins inserted into his leg.

Residents in Springfield Lane described being woken at 5am by the sound of a car revving its engine before a 'terrific bang,' followed by the anguished cries of 'my leg, my leg.'

Police want anyone with information on the taxi driver to call Sandwell officers on 101.

ROADS

More diversions at Paradise Circus

NEW diversions will be set up next month as part of the next stage of a £500 million redevelopment in Birmingham city centre. Paradise Circus is being transformed by demolishing the former city library and creating new retail and office space.

Access will be partially closed to Paradise Circus, the Sand Pits area, Broad Street and Summer Row from May 10.

Diversions for traffic will be sign posted. Bus services 82, 83, 87, 89, 10H and 126 will be affected. Pedestrians and cyclists will still be able to travel through Paradise Forum until the summer.

REPAIRS

Vital ceiling work on town hall complete

A £55,000 scheme to carry out vital repairs on the ceiling of Dudley Town Hall has been completed and the venue is expected to reopen on Wednesday, April 22.

The hall, in St James's Road, had been forced to close for four months after loose plaster was discovered on the ceiling. Work has also taken place to reinforce the balcony ceiling.

A tea dance will relaunch the venue and future concerts include veteran comedian Ken Dodd.

COURT

Murder suspect appears in court

A MAN charged with the murder of a father who was found dead in a basement has appeared in crown court.

Stuart Millership, aged 32, of Beeches Road, Rowley Regis, was appearing at Wolverhampton Crown Court for a plea and case management hearing. However, no plea was entered as the case was put back for more information to be gathered. He will next be in court on May 29.

Millership is accused of murdering Baljit Singh. The 50-year-old was discovered at a house in Beeches Road on New Year's Day. Millership, who is being held in custody, was arrested in Kingswinford.

INSIDE

VOYAGE WAS OAR-SOME



PAGE 6

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2 CONTENTS

MARK ANDREWS	6
LETTERS	7
DANIEL WAINWRIGHT	9
MEMORY LANE	16
THE FAST TICKET	19
PROPERTY	27
MOTORING	29
SPORT	39-40
CONTACT US	

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'Amazing' day as relatives relive past glories



Grandson Joseph Jeffrey places the match ball onto the



Widow Laraine Astle applauds the players in the 1968 kit



Jeff Astle in his England kit

Fans and family united in homage to The King

THE family of Jeff Astle were moved to tears as almost 28,000 fans united to pay a special tribute to the Albion legend dubbed The King.

Players and supporters came together to celebrate the legacy of the late former striker and mark the launch of the Jeff Astle Foundation which will be dedicated to researching the brain condition which claimed his life 13 years ago.

There was a celebratory mood among supporters before kick-off as they remembered The King and marked Astle Day. Kelvin Stokes, aged 66, was in his late teens when Astle scored the cup final winner. He said: "As a player he was dynamic, a real match winner. He was always there at the right time with his head. I remember he turned up once to a surprise someone we knew on their birthday and the first thing he said was 'where is the food' and later he was doing karaoke. He was one of the lads. He didn't put himself on a pedestal."

David Bing, 69, a season ticket holder, added: "We never lost a night game back in the 60s. They just used to put the ball over and Astle was there." Inside The Hawthorns, there were emotional scenes as Astle's family came onto the pitch and his youngest grandson, two-year-old Joseph Jeffrey, carried out the match ball.

The current players emerged from the tunnel in replica tracksuits. The Premier League had given Albion permission for the players to wear a replica kit from the 1968 FA Cup final. It is only the second time the Premier League had sanctioned such a move. Previously Manchester United were allowed to do so to mark the 50th anniversary of the Munich air disaster in 2008.

At half-time Astle's daughter Dawn told the fans her Dad had loved them "as much as they loved him" and thanked them for their support. And Astle's widow, Laraine, presented the entire sell-out crowd with the Jeff Astle Memorial trophy - presented annually to people who have made an outstanding contribution to the club.

Dawn said: "The bit that was really tough was when they showed the current team coming out of the tunnel and then switched it to the Cup final team coming out of that famous tunnel at Wembley in 1968. It was just amazing."



West Brom fans seated in the Birmingham Road End lift up coloured cards to pay tribute to The King



Daughters Dawn and Claire and widow Laraine line up



Doug Fraser, John Talbut, John Kaye, Graham Williams

NEWS IN BRIEF

Awareness event will focus on MS

AN AWARENESS event for people affected by multiple sclerosis is being held next week.

The MS Society's Dudley and district branch has organised the information day at Himley Hall on Tuesday, April 21, from 10am to 3pm. Refreshments will also be provided on the day.

The group is based at Dingle Community Centre, in Kingswinford, meeting each Tuesday at 10am until 3pm and is also launching on Monday evenings. Call Claire Speake of the branch on 07885 891107.

Sandwell libraries mark book night

LIBRARIES across Sandwell will be holding a series of events to celebrate this year's World Book Night.

The events are on April 23. Bleakhouse Library in Oldbury is hosting a book quiz and poetry reading with Gavin Young and Roz Goddard from 7pm. West Bromwich's Central Library is hosting a specially themed film club at 6.30pm and book gives will be in the library during the event. Tickets for the film cost £1.

Wedgesbury Library is running a charity book quiz at 7pm, hosted by Comedy Dave. Entry is £2 per person.

Team gears up for biking trek

THREE cyclists from Sandwell are to take on a charity bike challenge.

Mathew Burling, Steve Scrivens, and Anita Crees are to take on the Stroke Association's Thames Bridges Bike Ride on Sunday, May 10.

Each member of the team has lost someone close to stroke.

Mr Burling, aged 29, from Oldbury, lost his grandmother in 2000.

The charity supports people living with effects of stroke. For more details go to: www.stroke.org.uk.

Fresh boating season gets under way 'on cut'

DOZENS of canal boats descended on Tipton for a community day and real ale festival.

It was organised by Friends of Tipton Cut who welcomed visitors to the John the Lock moorings and the Fountain Inn.

The event heralded the start of this year's boating season allowing owners to catch up with friends and celebrate Tipton's canal heritage.

For further information email an.theoncut@virginmedia.com.

Play set to conquer

OLIVER Goldsmith's classic 240-year-old comedy play *She Stoops to Conquer* will be performed by Dudley Little Theatre next month.

The show will be staged at Netherton Arts Centre, Northfield Road, from May 13 to 16.

Tickets are £7, concessions £6.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Back in time with TV star Warwick

ACTOR Warwick Davis will be seen enjoying a day out at the Black Country Living Museum with his family, following a visit last year.

The screen star, who appeared in Star Wars and Harry Potter films, as well as BBC comedy Life's Too Short, filmed a visit to the Tipton Road attraction for travel show Weekend Escapes, being screened by ITV 1 on Friday at 8pm. This episode features central England when the Davis clan step back in time to visit the museum in full Victorian costume and end up enlisting in the First World War.

New park gym is hit by vandals

A £56,000 outdoor gym at a park in Colesey has been hit by vandals less than a month after it opened.

The gym, officially opened at Clayton Park on March 21, features a variety of outdoor exercise machines and phone charging stations. Vandals have daubed graffiti over machines and broken the phone chargers. The gym, including cross-trainers and spinning bikes, was designed to encourage people to get fit. Ward councillor Clem Baugh said: "It is not nice to see facilities which were installed for everybody being treated in such a way."

Brewery brings back Bomber beer

THE latest Heritage Heroes beer from Holden's Brewery is dedicated to Baggies legend Bomber Brown.

Throughout its centenary year the Woodsetton brewery is producing favourite special ales from over the years. The 4.1 per cent strength Bomber Brown was created in honour of West Bromwich Albion's record goalscorer Tony Brown.

The family brewery in Sedgley Road West will be holding an open weekend on July 18 and 19 with guided tours.

Pub helps fund dream holiday for ill boy, 8

FOUR days of fundraising at a Stourbridge pub has raised £4,000 to help send an eight-year-old boy, who has Duchenne muscular dystrophy, on a dream holiday.

The Hare and Hounds in Wollescote ran events, including a 12-hour charity darts match, during Easter to fund a holiday in America for James Wilde, of Halesowen, who wants to see monster trucks in action in the United States. Some of the funds will also be donated to Muscular Dystrophy UK.

Sale and choral concert

PEOPLE can enjoy two events being held at St Peter's Church in Upper Gornal this Saturday.

A bric-a-brac and book sale will take place from 10am to noon and then Colesey Male Voice Choir will be performing at 7.30pm. Tickets for the concert are £5 on the door.

Deal aims to drive down the numbers of jobless

NEW figures have laid bare the challenging task ahead to tackle unemployment in a Sandwell ward recently awarded a slice of £5.6 million to drive down the numbers of jobless.

Figures show that Princes End, in Tipton, has the highest proportion of social rented properties in Sandwell at 42.6 per cent compared to the borough average of 27.4 per cent.

Under the City Deal initiative, a scheme will be set up in Princes End in Sandwell, as well as in Bilston East, in Wolverhampton; Darlaston South, in Walsall and Kates Hill, in Dudley.

The money is to tackle joblessness among 18 to 24-year-olds and help more residents gain skills and qualifications.

It will be distributed to organisations to set up training courses to give 2,800 disadvantaged families skills.

Jobseekers Allowance claims in Princes End in Tipton stand at eight per cent with 27.6 per cent of those aged 18 to 24 claiming the payment. About 41 per cent of residents have no qualifications compared to the Sandwell average of 35 per cent.

Darlaston South is the fifth most deprived ward in Walsall borough. It has 14,342 residents with 39.1 per cent of households in rented social housing.

The five-year Black Country pilot programme is being led by housing provider the Accord Group. Accord's City Deal project director Jacki Lakin said: "We are inviting providers to propose innovative solutions to meet the needs of the local community."

Man seriously hurt during street fight

A MAN suffered serious head injuries after a Dudley street brawl.

Two groups of men clashed on Stourbridge Road outside the mini mart near the junction with Spring Parklands. Police said more than 10 men were involved in the fight at around 2.30pm on Saturday. A 41-year-old man was left with serious head injuries and was taken to hospital.

West Midlands Police believe some of those involved ran from the scene, while others got into vehicles.

The stretch of road where the violence took place was sealed off by police while a forensics search was carried out. Anyone who witnessed the fight or was in the area at the time is asked to contact 101.

Guided walks are part of festival

WALKING and history trails are being held in Dudley. Guided walks form the annual Dudley Walking Festival, which runs from Monday, concluding with the Dudley Trail on May 3. See www.dudley.gov.uk/himleyhall

£70k raised for tribute to Gulf fallen



An artist's impression of the memorial

A MEMORIAL will be set up in Staffordshire to troops who died in the Gulf War after £70,000 was raised by volunteers.

Among the 47 fallen were Shaun Taylor, of Stourbridge, and Kieran Duffy, from Kidderminster.

The statue will be unveiled in February 2016 at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, to mark the 25th anniversary of the war ending in 1991. Organisers were concerned the year-long conflict was often overlooked in remembrance events and deserved its own memorial.

Private Shaun Taylor, who served with the Staffordshire Regiment, was accidentally shot by a fellow soldier.

The tragedy happened as the 20-year-old's Warrior armoured vehicle, of which he was the driver, was about to go into action.

Section leader Corporal Darren Wilson, who was with him when he died, described him as the life and soul of his Warrior vehicle and a very professional soldier.

Former pupil at Oldswinford Hospital School, RAF pilot Flight Lieutenant Kieran Duffy, aged 24, from

Larches Road, Kidderminster, was killed instantly when his aircraft crashed in the Omani Desert in Saudi Arabia during a low-level training flight just before the war broke out.

He had been awarded a flying scholarship in 1982, qualified as a pilot while studying for his A-levels and joined the RAF in 1985.

Michael Rowley, who has helped run the memorial project, said the design was modern and simple but also distinctive. For more information on the appeal, visit www.gulfwarmemorial.co.uk

MORE than £2 million of funding has been secured to start work on Dudley borough's new glass museum.

The old Stuart Crystal site in Wordsley is being transformed into the visitor attraction which will celebrate the town's glass-making heritage.

The museum, which will have a modern glass front, will directly face the Red House Glass Cone. Work has now begun on site with the funding of £2.15m from the European Regional Development Fund due to be signed off this month.

The project is being delivered by Complex Development Projects in partnership with the British Glass Foundation and Dudley Council.

Managing director Ian Harrabin said contractors Croft Building and Conservation Limited were now carrying out work at the former factory site to stabilise the existing building and to remove fire damage from arson attacks over the years the factory was disused.

Mr Harrabin said: "This work is nearing completion and alterations to the structure of the building are also starting. A new roof should be fully built within the next few weeks. After 10 years of planning it is fair to say the restoration of the factory is now well underway."

Apartments

He said beams for the new roof were on order in preparation for their installation.

Alongside the new glass museum there will also be 11 offices and 18 loft apartments built on the site.

Mr Harrabin said work on all phases of the project were scheduled for completion towards the end of this year. The museum itself is expected to be open by 2016.

Mr Harrabin said: "It is a very exciting scheme and we are looking forward to it taking shape over the coming months."

It will create 23 jobs and it is hoped the new museum will bring in more than 500,000 visitors per year.

The new museum will be used to showcase the borough's glass treasures and give a history of the town's glass-making heritage through interactive displays.

Funding is also being provided by the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership. The grant from the partnership is around £1.3m.

Preparatory work included an archaeological dig where the White House Glass Cone once stood.

Vision for light rail station in town



How the light rail station and innovation centre could look from the Black Country Living Museum

THIS is the latest vision for the first very light rail station in the Black Country.

The new image shows what the reopened Dudley railway station, rail service to Dudley Port and very light rail innovation centre will look like.

The scheme aims to revive a stretch of railway track that has lay dormant for more than 20 years by transforming it for use by the state-of-the-art light rail

trains, which would reconnect Dudley to the national rail network.

The £20 million project is part of a partnership between the council and Warwick Manufacturing Group, which is keen to use Dudley's disused rail lines to test new light rail technology.

That technology is a development of what is currently used on the Stourbridge Shuttle, known as the Parry People Mover and uses

flywheel energy storage. It could create around 45 jobs at the outset with possibly hundreds more in future.

Bids will be made to the Government's Regional Growth Fund and Europe to fund the creation of an innovation centre at the site of the old Dudley train station on council land at the bottom of Castle Hill. There will be two lines – one for testing new vehicles and the other for passengers.

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REJOICE, for enormous quantities of oil have been discovered in Surrey. In time, this could make us far less dependent on oil extracted from unstable parts of the world with civil strife, bizarre religious practices and wild tribal divisions. I refer, of course, to Scotland.

A DELEGATE at the National Union of Teachers' conference claimed new security rules aimed to prevent radicalism were turning teachers into spies. Or to put it another way, inviting teachers to be socially responsible. Would you want to be the teacher who, in the wake of a jihadist massacre in an English city, admitted that, yeah, you were always a bit suspicious about little Hamza in Year 12 but decided it was better to defend his right to privacy?

WE take tweeters far too seriously. Just a few years ago, if anyone accused an actor as popular as Roger Moore of being a racist, the national media would make sure they checked the credentials of whoever was making such a serious allegation. Social media has changed all that. A bunch of tweeters with names like Wazzle444 and Aryanwarrior decide Sir Roger is a racist, based on an interview he gave to a French magazine, and are



somehow regarded as serious sources when they could well be no more than children, drunks or members of what we used to call the green-ink brigade. Something about computers and the internet makes us treat tweeters seriously in a way we never treated old-fashioned poison-pen writers. And so the story takes off and one of Britain's most distinguished actors, with a fine record of charity and disaster-relief work, is forced on the defensive by anonymous nobodies who denounce him as "an old racist" and "an ignorant old fool." My own policy on encountering tweeters, trolls and suchlike is to regard them as 14-year-old bedwetters using their mums' computers, until proven otherwise.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Terrifying ordeal of father in car-jacking

A TEENAGER told a father he would 'pop his face off' with a gun, terrifying his young son and then stealing his car from a leisure centre car park, a court heard.

Brad Arnold, aged 18, of Verdon Crescent, Kates Hill, was sentenced on charges including robbery at Wolverhampton Crown Court last week. He had already been convicted on four other charges.

By Simon Stone

Mr Richard Davenport, prosecuting, said that the victim had taken his son to Dudley Leisure Centre for a swimming lesson in June.

On returning to his car with his son, a group of youths approached.

Arnold, among them, showed him a bag he was carrying and told him: "It's a gun and I will pop your face off."

Weapon

Mr John Evans, defending, said while there was a threat, there was no evidence the weapon existed. Arnold 'is still growing up', he told the court, but had plans to start his own car washing business.

Arnold pleaded guilty and was sentenced to three years in a young offenders facility for robbery, two counts of theft, one of driving a vehicle without consent of the owner, theft of two phones and a satnav from a taxi.

Appearing with Arnold, Macauley Baddams, aged

18, of Baumbrook Close, Netherton, and Jordan Steinson, aged 19, of Norman Street, Dudley, were both sentenced to 12 month community orders and 150 hours unpaid work for being carried in a vehicle without consent of the owner and theft from the taxi.

Christopher Bill, aged 19, of Lister Road, Netherton, was sentenced to a community order with 12 months' supervision, a curfew, and has to attend a thinking skills programme, for driving without authority and theft from the taxi.

Michael Bennett, aged 21, of St George's Road, Sledmere, was sentenced to five months' prison, suspended for 12 months, and 150 hours' unpaid work for being carried in a motor vehicle without consent of the owner and the theft from the taxi.

Pair dive in to help ambulance



Skydive colleagues Kathryn Williamson and Jack Edmonds

TWO members of the Midlands office of national audit, tax and advisory firm Crowe Clark Whitehill, in Oldbury, have completed a skydive for charity.

At the second attempt on Saturday - weather conditions were not right first time - Kathryn Williamson, marketing assistant, and Jack Edmonds, trainee chartered accountant stepped out of an aircraft in tandem, with instructors at 10,000ft over Shropshire's Tilstock Airfield. They have raised £2,137.50 for Midlands Air Ambulance Charity, the office's nominated charity.

"It was a great experience and a real thrill," said Kathryn, who lives in Oldbury, Jack, from Halesowen, added, "We would like to thank everyone who contributed so generously to backing us."

Johnathan Dudley, Midlands managing partner of Crowe Clark Whitehill, congratulated the pair. "This was an extremely brave thing to do and I am very proud of Kathryn and Jack for going the extra mile to give our fund-raising such a massive boost," he said.

Concern as intensive care beds are filled

EVERY intensive care bed was full at hospitals across the West Midlands on a string of occasions last year.

Health trusts have to report the situation on the last Thursday of each month.

Critical care beds at Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital were all occupied on six of 12 days reported, including November, December and February.

The worst performing was Walsall's health trust, when beds were all full on nine of the 12 days they submitted figures. Beds at Sandwell Hospital and City Hospital were all occupied on the Thursday in March 2014 but the situation has improved.

The Royal College of Surgeons has warned that more than 82 per cent of beds being used can lead to an increased risk of infection.

Dr Mark Porter, chairman of the British Medical Association council, said: "High occupancy rates are a real concern because they leave little or no spare capacity to deal with a spike in demand for critical care, leaving the most seriously ill patients at risk."

Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust chief executive Paula Clark said the information provided is based on the 20 standard beds and did not include several additional beds available in other units.

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Swimmers take a dip on wild side



Come on in the water's fine — swimmers Sarah and Martyn

FOR many of us a dip in UK waters — even at the height of summer — is a distinctly chilly affair.

So the idea of splashing around in lakes and rivers all year round — well, that's just plain crazy, right? It seems the answer is no.

While wild swimming — outdoor swimming, whatever the weather — sounds like utter madness to the uninitiated, it is a sport which is growing in popularity with 500 fans in Shropshire and the West Midlands alone. Sarah Lewis, of Halesowen, started the Midland Inland Swimming group six years ago. Now it has more than 400 members who meet regularly at Swan Pool in Sandwell Valley.

Wild swimming in lakes and rivers is growing in popularity, CHARLIE BENTON reports

Sarah discovered wild swimming after growing tired of the chlorine and overcrowding in public swimming baths. The 45-year-old said: "I have always been a swimming fan and have been a member of indoor groups previously. But about six years ago I discovered outdoor swimming and just got hooked."

Sarah decided to set up the Midland Inland Swimming group in 2009. It now has members ranging in age from eight to 80.

"It is growing in popularity very quickly. I think it is due to people being turned off from swimming

baths for whatever reason, whether it is the temperature of the pool, the constant turning at the end of the lanes or the chlorine. And once you have started it is really addictive."

Sarah said she was unaware of outdoor swimming until reading about it on the internet.

"I thought it was a really nice idea and something a little different. I tried it and soon I was addicted."

Sarah, who is a manager at kitchen manufacturer Penwood Midlands, says outdoor swimming has also become something of a family affair. Her 12-year-old son Thomas often joins her or he is aboard one of the kayaks which accompanies the swimmers for safety.

Shock

Sarah's partner Ian Taylor also regularly mans one of the kayaks during events. She says the coldest water she has ever swam in was four degrees celsius.

"I have to admit I was not in the water very long that time. It was probably only around four minutes," she said.

She favours edging into the water to allow her body to acclimatise to the drop in temperature.

"Obviously, when you first enter cold water there is an initial shock so I think getting into the water more slowly is the best way to do it.



Sarah Lewis and Martyn Bentley in their wetsuits before going in

However, I know some taking part in competitive events do choose to just jump in. "And we don't always swim in colder waters. Sometimes it can be as warm as 18 degrees celsius and, in those cases, you can stay in the water for a longer period of time."

The only equipment needed is a wetsuit, which can be picked up for about £60 or less, and perhaps a flask for a nice hot cup of tea once you are out.

Sarah's favourite spots for river swims include the Severn and the Trent, as well as the Humber estuary in Hull. "We work closely with

the Environment Agency to ensure the water is clean," she said. "I imagined the Humber to be quite dirty because of how popular it is with boaters but the water there is cleaner than it has been for more than 10 years."

She said as long as people are sensible, and know how to swim, outdoor swimming is safe and enjoyable — and has a great social side.

"I would urge people to come along and try it out. You see the world from a completely different viewpoint. You can get close to nature. There really is nothing like it."



Sarah Lewis and Martyn Bentley take the plunge at Swan Pool



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Town prides itself on harmonious relations

THE revelations of the former Tory candidate for Dudley North foolishly trying to negotiate with and invite the racist EDL back to Dudley were truly shocking.

They stand in complete opposition to the vast majority of residents in Dudley that did not want the EDL to come and disrupt the town. Over 100 representatives of different faith groups, trade unions and political parties in Dudley all signed the 'Unity Statement' calling upon the EDL to keep their racist violence out of Dudley. Over 300 local residents attended a Unity rally organised by Unite Against Fascism, including members of Dudley Central Mosque. Dudley is a multi-cultural town that prides itself on having harmonious community relations.

The most recent person to be given freedom of the Borough is Lenny Henry, which symbolically shows that racist organisations are not welcome in Dudley. We believe that all faiths have a right to worship and to a place to carry that out. Politicians should not use Dudley, nor the desire for one section of Dudley's Muslim community to have a new place of worship, to be used to divide us.

Cathy Bayton, President of Dudley Trades Council
Tony Barnsley, Love Music Hate Racism in Dudley
Jerry Langford, Dudley Unite Against Fascism
Martin Lynch, Dudley National Union of Teachers
Will Duckworth, Green Party Candidate for Dudley North
Paul Singh, Dudley Sikhs Against the EDL

Healthier people in tough times

MY two brothers, our sister and myself were born just before or during World War Two. We had no hot water on tap and the toilet was 'up the garden'.

One of us had asthma as a child and we had the usual mumps and measles. Two of us had scarlet fever, but that was it health wise.

We played outside, getting dirty and eating our food without washing our hands. We had to take turns at cleaning out the fireplace, black leading the fireplace, brass cleaning the taps, etc.

Our weekly bath was in the tin bath in front of the coal fire. We also helped our granny and an elderly aunt to 'podge' rugs - no fitted carpets.

All of us are still alive and into our 70s. We all have grandchildren, some of whom have been affected by modern illnesses.

In my case, two of my grandchildren are affected by nut allergies.

Progress of modern living?

P COLE
Kingswinford

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

Letters should be brief and **MUST** include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

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Stourbridge gets all the attention

I READ again that Stourbridge is in for another load of funding - £3m from the Heritage Lottery and the Big Lottery combined for Mary Stevens Park.

It was a different story six years ago when Cosely Baths needed funding. Living in the same street and attending the baths on a regular basis, we knew how it had been neglected for years. When the death knell was sounded for the baths an alleged £2m was needed, for my part Dudley Council couldn't wait to demolish it.

So I would like to know why Stourbridge, under the control of the Dudley Council, as is Cosely, always seem to be getting the lion's share of any funding. The Crystal Leisure Centre has

had enough funding, now it's Mary Stevens Park.

Last year Cosely playing fields, directly behind where the baths stood, had about one third of its footpath resurfaced, the other two thirds left with pot holes. After complaining to my MP and receiving a copy of a letter off Dudley Council, some pot holes were filled. What a waste of time, now that has been dug up and gym equipment installed.

Yes, Dudley Council took our well used community asset off us and now they can't even replace or resurface a whole footpath but they can get £3m worth of funding for a park in Stourbridge.

P A JORDAN
Cosely

Plinth now a fast food eating area

HOW very thoughtful of the planners of the market place in Dudley to have placed the Duncan Edwards statue on a very large plinth.

So convenient for crowds to sit and eat their fast food, obtainable from the many outlets in the surrounding area, whilst overlooking the castle.

Let's hope they provide plenty of bins for the wrappings of such food to be placed in.

Still on the subject of the market place has anyone else noticed the number of stalls which are not taken?

People don't seem to be rushing to Dudley to sell their wares but it is early days and maybe eventually there will be some clamouring for space.

L SHELTON
Dudley

Thank you

I would like to thank Easy Living Mobility, Dudley, for the excellent after sale service when I reported a fault with my scooter. I would recommend them any time.

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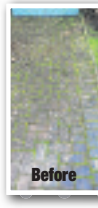
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Lowdown on murder cases

Black Country Society - Kingswinford

THE meeting on March 18 was opened at 7.45pm in St Mary's Church Hall, Kingswinford.

The chairman welcomed Ian Bott, a long standing society member, who has given a variety of talks to this group over the years. He comes from Wednesbury and has written six books and now working on his seventh.

His talk was 'Black Country Murders'. He outlined seven very gruesome murder cases, mostly domestic, ranging from suffocation, slit throats and shootings. Slides relating to the happenings were interesting as many illustrations had been taken from old books.

Ian was thanked for his fascinating talk delivered in light-hearted style.

At the May 20 meeting will be another ex-president, Roy Peacock with 'War Memories Centenary'. Talks are open to members and non-members with a charge to cover expenses of £1 and £1.50 respectively.

Queens speech given by guest

MyTime Over Fifties

MARCH'S meeting commenced with a talk by Patricia Boyd entitled Victoria and Elizabeth Jubilee.

The talk began with a brief look at the kings and queens that have reigned over us. Of them all only George III, Victoria and Elizabeth II have had diamond jubilees, although George's was not celebrated due to ill health. Ms Boyd discussed the similarities and differences between the two queens accompanied by some interesting photographs.

MyTime Over Fifties meets on the third Wednesday in the month in the Ambleside Room at Stourbridge Town Hall at 2pm. The next meeting is on April 22 when Nigel Metcalfe will be talking about the men who mapped the Arctic.

Newcomers are welcome to join for interesting speakers, afternoon tea and chat.

Call Graham 01384 393483 or Audrey 01385 864223.

Members taken behind scenes of hit BBC show

Wolverhampton Women's Luncheon Club

THERE were 65 members present at the March Luncheon meeting at The Lindens, Tattenhall Road, Wolverhampton, as well as six guests and the speaker.

The chairman welcomed everyone on a lovely sunny day. She then said Grace. The menu was pate maison, cod loin with emony potatoes and sherry trifle, followed by tea or coffee and mints.

After the meal, the chairman mentioned that there were two new members present, Mrs Deborah Williams and Mrs Jean Beard, as well as an old member, Mrs White who had re-joined the club and also several guests who she hoped would also become members.

She asked members to sign the papers on the tables if they wanted to go to the tree planting ceremony at the National Memorial Arboretum on April 22.

The chairman introduced the speaker, Richard Buttress who works at Wightwick Manor as a volunteer guide and his talk was entitled "Behind the Scenes at the BBC's Antiques Road Show at Wightwick Manor".

Richard began his talk by thanking the club for a lovely lunch. He said he supported the Wolverhampton Coronary Aftercare Support Group and he donates his fee to this. On the day the BBC presented the show he was asked to act as a security guard to prevent the public from entering any of the rooms where the antiques were kept.

He explained that the BBC have a large media team and that Wightwick Manor has been used by Countryfile and Flog It.

There are a lot of requirements which have to be fulfilled.

About eight weeks before the show was filmed, teams came to



Speaker Richard Buttress

see about car parking facilities, design and technical issues, make up areas, catering etc and a week before the BBC contacted people who were bringing large objects in for valuation and information to make sure everything was in place.

The recording takes place on a Thursday and the day before large lorries arrived with tables, chairs and umbrellas and placed them in pre-selected spots on the terraces and lawns.

A mobile control room was set up with two miles of cabling being used. Fiona Bruce arrived the day before the recording and on the day the public queued from 8am.

At the end of his talk Richard invited questions and then Suzanne Morgan gave the vote of thanks. The chairman thanked Richard, the raffle was held and there were three prizes of Easter gifts.

The chairman wished everyone a Happy Easter and a safe journey.

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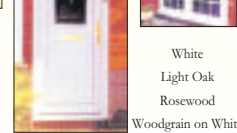
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What really goes on in the election trail



DANIEL WAINWRIGHT
Political Editor

THE Tories warned there could be a charge of £20 for passes to attend their election events.

I thought 'that's one way to get the deficit down'.

The fee would apply to any of us lowly hacks and photographers who failed to apply before March 27.

They wanted to know everything from our home addresses to our passport and driving licence numbers.

I would not have been surprised if they'd wanted my inside leg measurement too but mercifully I was spared that indignity. This is just one example of how this General Election is being rigorously stage-managed.

Separated

When Ed Miliband and some of the shadow cabinet came to Jaguar Land Rover's engine plant, we wicked Press were kept penned inside a glass room and separated from the dignitaries who had come to hear them speak until the speech itself.

There was an excuse about health and safety and we were told to stay in an office and watch as the business leaders mingled. When George Osborne came to the Red House Glass Cone in Wordsley, it all came across as a wonderfully jolly encounter but as soon as we arrived we were herded into a side room, the door closed behind us and we were kept out of the way until he was ready for us.

We couldn't talk to the would-be MPs, nor could we mingle with the



Eddy Izzard in Halesowen



Nigel Farage campaigning



George Osborne at Wordsley



Jeremy Hunt at Cannock

public. The convenient effect of this is that were the Chancellor to be greeted by an angry voter who wanted to speak his or her mind, we would be none the wiser. Even the celebrity backers are carefully marshalled. Eddie Izzard's appearance in Halesowen was greeted by a group of placard-waving Labour supporters who flanked him as he walked down the high street in his stiletto heels. He probably met just a handful of floating voters.

What we don't get anywhere near enough of is the big name politicians out on the streets doing a walkabout. They are shunted about and have only the flimsiest grasp of where in the country they even are. The low light of this second week of campaigning came from the health secretary,

Jeremy Hunt. He was in Staffordshire to meet with bosses at Cannock Chase Hospital.

My photographer was allowed to go along but I was told I had to wait for a phone call from the minister. When his call did finally come, I was told he would answer just two questions.

Patrick McLoughlin, the former miner turned Tory secretary of state was exactly the same. Nigel Farage, too, for all his many controversial statements, comes across as a 'what you see is what you get' type.

As the Bard said, 'all the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players'. The politicians are taking their cues and they're rehearsing their lines. We voters are the ones who are being played.

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Shakes to sound of raw passion

ALBUM REVIEWS

By Leon Burakowski

THE torch bearers for Deep South blues, rock and soul, Alabama Shakes, keep it real with a distinctive second album, *Sound & Color*.

On it the band explore funky new directions and stretch themselves after making a stir in 2012 with their rock-fuelled debut *Boys & Girls*.

Singer and guitarist Britney Howard gives her most impassioned vocal performances so far as the band from Athens, Alabama, create a potent moonshine of funk, blues and swamp rock.

Highlights include *Don't Wanna Fight* with its edgy guitar plucking as Britney repeats the title with an almost hysterical intensity. She adopts a falsetto on the loose limbed funk of *Future People* as the songs builds to a crashing cacophony. *Gimme All Your Love* is deep fried southern soul with a wail that should earn nods of approval from Robert Plant and Jack White. She shows a sweeter side on the wonky soul of *Guess Who*, complete with vibes and strings, while *Shoegaze* has a Rolling Stones swagger about it.

The ballad *Miss You* opens with the memorable couplet 'I'm gonna miss you and your Mickey Mouse tattoo' and explodes with raw passion. With a bare bones accompaniment and odd changes of tempo, *Over My Head* makes for a downbeat, delicate closer.

Sound & Color is out on April 21 on ATO Records. Alabama Shakes play Birmingham O2 Academy on May 13, a gig that promises to be something rather special.

Sony's three-CD compilation *Synth Pop* is a feast of great music from the 1970s and 80s when synth was king and lots of people with odd haircuts



The Alabama Shakes explore funky new directions on second album *Sound & Color*

used a keyboard rather than a guitar to craft some brilliant pop records. So Donna Summer's (and Giorgio Moroder's) hugely influential *I Feel Love* shares the limelight with Gary Numan, The Human League, Ultravox, Visage, New Order, Soft Cell, Yazoo and Art Of Noise. Depeche Mode, Bowie and Kraftwerk are glaring omissions whilst Spandau Ballet and Aztec Camera, good as they are, don't fit the brief.

Fans of Nick Cave or even Siouxsie Sioux can luxuriate in the mellow vocals of *Nadine Shah* on her second album, *Fast Food* (Apollon/R&S Records), with tracks that border upon goth cabaret. There's also a hint of gothic about *Strange Trails* by Lord Huron (Play It Again Sam), although these country and folk influenced guitar-driven songs revel in a reverb-drenched tumbleweed ghost town feel. Songs like *Dead Man's Hand* and *Meet Me In The Woods* hint at dark deeds and these grim prairie tales have a certain allure when delivered by singer and songwriter Ben Schneider. You would find *Frozen Pines* on the jukebox in the Twin Peaks diner.

The 1960s family group *The Cow-*

sills, inspiration for The Partridge Family, had million-selling hits in their US homeland but remain virtually unknown in the UK. Much of their output was twee but their self-titled 1967 album (reissued by Now Sounds) does have several fine examples of summer-of-love sunshine pop, particularly US top five hit *The Rain, The Park And Other Things*. The CD includes bonus tracks, mono versions and a 24-page booklet to bring 60s music fans up to speed with pop's answer to the Von Trapps.

Before *Demis Roussos* became associated with 1970s dinner parties thanks to such middle-of-the-Med hits as *Forever And Ever* and Mike Leigh's play *Abigail's Party*, he sang with Euro prog rockers Aphrodite's Child. His own concept album (reissued by RPM), *On The Greek Side Of My Mind*, is the link between the band and his solo career. It begins with Roussos spouting Lotus eater mumbo jumbo then exercising his helium tenor over Gregorian-like chants, before settling into a groove of psychedelic Grecian folk pop. We Shall Dance hints at the style of warbling that was to bring him fame.

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I'm going out in style, says mother with cancer

DESPITE having only months to live, mother-of-three Maxine Smith is determined to make the most of the time she has left by taking part in a skydive.

She reels off the types of cancer she has suffered as if reading from a shopping list. There is barely a part of her body that has not been touched by the illness.

She has been told that her condition is terminal and that she has just six months to live.

"It was a bit heart-breaking," said the 46-year-old, of Red Lion Close, Tividale, of being told the news. "I was sitting thinking I have got three children who I am never going to see grow up, get married and go to high school."

It seems a world away for Maxine, but there was a time when she didn't have cancer, when she was starting a family with husband Rob and looking ahead to life's possibilities.

"I was the healthiest bunny, I never thought I would get it," said Maxine, who is mother to daughter Hannah-Paige, 10, and eight-year-old twin sons Daniel and Alex.

"I found a lump, it kept reappearing and disappearing. My mum asked me to get checked. She had suffered with cancer three or four years before. Then I found out I had grade two breast cancer."

That was in 2010 and an extremely turbulent five years were to follow. After the trauma of undergoing a double mastectomy, a breast reconstruction allowed her to regain some confidence. But two years later, Maxine was told that they too would have to be removed as the cancer had returned. The year in between she was diagnosed with skin cancer.

"Then my head wasn't right," Maxine said. "So I was given a CT scan. I need to start radiotherapy on my brain in a week. I need 12 to 13 sessions and hopefully it may help but my life expectancy has decreased to six months."



Maxine Smith, 46, from Tividale has been told she has six months to live

"In a nutshell, I've had breast cancer, lung cancer, skin cancer, bone cancer and brain cancer. In the last five years they have all cropped up."

She is also able to raise a smile, crack a joke and is determined to enjoy her final few months. She has taken to wearing bright colours and odd socks and is preparing for a skydive.

Maxine admitted that there have been dark times but says she has accepted her fate.

"I thought about suicide but I had to think about my children and try and get through it for them. When I was told I hadn't got long left I just

thought 'I'm going to embrace it' and become this crazy lady."

"I have always wanted to skydive but it's something I've never done because I'm scared of heights. But when I came out of that meeting, I thought 'that's it, I'm skydiving'."

Maxine says the thrill of the skydive has given her something to look forward to and focus on. "I am just taking each day as it comes," she said.

The skydive is expected to take place in the summer. Maxine has managed to convince a few brave friends to join her, while the generosity of fundraisers means it has already been paid for.

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Former mosque leader's relief as son is released

THE former leader of a Black Country mosque has told of the strain of his son being at the centre of a terrorism probe.

The ordeal ended this month when Usman Choudhary was jailed for nine months for possessing and distributing a terrorist publication, but immediately freed because of the time spent in custody.

His father Ghulam, the ex-chairman of Dudley Central Mosque, said: "Naturally this has been a terrible time for me as a parent and I am glad it is now all over."

The nightmare started in December 2013 when police raided the Dudley home of his 34-year-old son who had sent a terrorist book to a prisoner in a British jail who was allegedly being radicalised.

Officers discovered 500 letters that revealed Usman had been in correspondence with some of the world's most feared terrorists for three years and had the image of a beheaded man on his mobile phone.

He was held in custody for nine months before being released on bail pending completion of the case that ended at Kingston upon Thames Crown Court when he admitted in sending the book he acted recklessly in a way that could have indirectly encouraged an act of terrorism.

Judge Peter Birts QC told Choudhary: "Your conduct was reprehensible but reckless rather than intentional. I accept you are not somebody who would engage directly or indirectly in terrorism. It is said that you have learned your lesson from this case and I very much hope that to be the case."



Dave Heeley during one of the stages of the marathon in the Sahara with guide Rosemary Rhodes

Blind Dave's horrible and fantastic desert adventure

BRUISED and blistered but exhilarated - charity champion Dave Heeley has arrived home after completing his latest gruelling challenge, a 160-mile run across the Sahara desert.

The keen West Bromwich Albion fan has made history after becoming the first blind athlete to complete the Marathon Des Sables.

During the extreme challenge he has braved searing temperatures of between 45 and 50 degrees celsius - around 122 degrees fahrenheit - and freak weather, including sandstorms fanned by 60mph winds.

The father-of-three, who was raising money for the Albion Foundation, said he suffered blistered feet from the rough and often rocky terrain, which included walks up 590ft high sand dunes and mountains up to 1,500ft high.

So far, he has raised over £20,000 for the charity, but he aims for a figure of £30,000.

He said: "It has just been a horrible adventure in respect of how gruelling it has been, but at the same time an absolutely fantastic adventure."

During his trip, he also met Sir Ranulph Fiennes, who has been named the world's greatest living explorer by the Guinness Book of World Records, as the 71-year-old completed a record of his own by becoming the oldest Briton to finish the intense six day trek. He said the pair discussed family life during their meeting.

Mr Heeley added: "There were over 1,000 competitors. Each and every single one of them was fantastic."

He completed the race in stages, with the longest being a 91km trek, while there was also a 42km stage. He had support from his two guides Tony Ellis and Rosemary Rhodes who accompanied him across the desert. His kit bag weighed around 9kgs and carried all his essentials.

They stayed in a bivouac every night, which is a French-style tent. The team had to eat a minimum of 2,000 calories a day and drink plenty of water.

On his return to the Hawthorns ground on Monday, he was given the red carpet treatment, while a blind football team from Sandwell was also present to welcome him back. The money raised will help to pay for improved facilities for disabled athletes involved with the Albion Foundation.

To donate see www.justgiving.com/blinddavevms or go to website www.thealbionfoundation.co.uk

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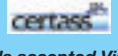
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Zoo chief has retired after his suspension

THE chief executive of Dudley Zoo, who was suspended amid an investigation into his conduct, has stepped down from his job 'by mutual agreement'.

Peter Suddock has retired from the zoo after 22 years in the post. His retirement comes ten days after the zoo announced his suspension. He had been suspended on full pay as an investigation was carried out into his conduct.

The zoo said the inquiry had concluded, and no further action was to be taken. The zoo, a registered charity, would not reveal what the investigation was over. Charity Commission bosses said they did not have any grounds for concern about the charity.

Mr Suddock's wife Jill Hitchman, also recently left her post as head of media at the attraction.

In a statement, Mr Suddock said, that at the age of 68, 'it was time to retire'.

Negotiations
Zoo trustee and former Dudley Council leader Councillor David Sparks said: "I know there was negotiations between his solicitors and solicitors from the zoo."

He added: "I think after turning the zoo around it is sad he (Mr Suddock) should retire in such circumstances."

"No matter what happens, Dudley Zoo will go from strength to strength."

Mr Suddock oversaw the turnaround of the zoo. When he arrived it had just 150,000 visitors in one year. Now it attracts double that.

In a statement, Mr Suddock said: "I shall miss being part of a dedicated team and the daily pleasure of seeing some of the world's rarest species, and am immensely proud to have helped create a flourishing tourist attraction with a bright future."

"But at 68 it's time to retire, pursue other interests, and hand over the reins of this truly unique site to its next custodian."

By Simon Stone

Public back Aldi store

MORE than 80 people turned out to view plans for a new Aldi store in Lye.

The supermarket will be built on the former site of the Bronx works in Dudley Road. If granted permission, it will create 40 jobs with additional jobs created through construction and supply chain opportunities.

The plans went on display at Lye Town Football Club on Stourbridge Road. Aldi said there received 210 responses to the consultation with 94 per cent of people backing the multi-million pound scheme.

An Aldi spokesperson said: "We are extremely pleased with the number of residents who attended our exhibition and are delighted with the overwhelmingly positive response we received from the local community. The majority of residents who attended the event said that Lye needs a discount food store. Many residents mentioned that they have to travel out of the area to complete their food shopping."

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The Ghost Train is running out of steam

The Ghost Train Grand, Wolverhampton
ARNOLD Ridley, known to most as Private Godfrey in Dad's Army, was a prolific playwright and this is probably his most successful pen work.

More than 90 years on, the tale of intrigue has been given a new run courtesy of director Patric Kearns.

The show centres on a group of travellers stranded at a remote pre-Beeching railway station subject to a local

legend of 'the ghost train'. Forced to stay the night after missing their connection through the antics of the 'joker' of the pack, Teddie Deakin played by Tom Butcher, the passengers become unwittingly embroiled in arms smuggling.

Hi-De-Hi! star Jeffrey Holland as the station master Saul Hodgkin set the scene for all the other characters by relaying the spectral story. Butcher's portrayal of Deakin, in the

1940s film played by Arthur Askey as Tommy Gander, was neither madcap enough to be funny nor manic enough to be annoying. Corinne Wicks gave quite a strong performance as the uncertain feminist Elsie.

Like the character he portrayed in Dad's Army, Ridley's humour is gentle and slow. This production is like a museum piece but there were some genuine jump in your seat moments.

Danny Farragher

'Miracle' man left us breathless

Derren Brown, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

I'VE seen him several times, on the television and in live shows, and there is always one question I come away with 'How on earth did he do that?'

Mind-bending master of illusion Derren Brown left the packed-to-the-rafters theatre breathless as he raced around the stage – literally – amazing all with his quick wit and amazing performances.

It is always difficult reviewing Derren Brown as he is quite rightly adamant that no secrets must be given away, so as not to spoil it for other people who will be going to later shows.

This Miracle tour is very aptly named as he performs just that but in the Derren Brown way. No more details, just to say that it will amaze and baffle audiences.

This was his seventh production since 2003 but the award-winning showman, who uses psychology to create the illusion of supernatural powers, gives few clues away.

Sue Attwater

REVIEWS



Sisters Anna and Elsa proved the highlight for the many Frozen fans

Disney spectacular lit up the faces of the delighted fans

Disney on Ice Magical Ice Festival Genting Arena, Birmingham

IT was what the young – and not so young – fans of Disney On Ice were waiting for, Frozen.

And this perfect end to this brilliant show at Birmingham's Genting Arena brought loud cheers and screams as the snow fell and sisters Anna and Elsa took to the stage along with the lovable snowman Olaf.

Before that the delighted audience was treated to all their other Disney favourites including Mickey and Minnie Mouse, Goofy and Donald Duck. The costumes were quite amazing as were the special effects.

Whether a fan of Disney or not – and who isn't? – you could not fail to be won over as the brilliant ice skaters told the story of Frozen, Beauty and the Beast, the Little Mermaid, and many, many more – all quite enchanting.

As a granny I was honoured to be taken along and the look on little Kelli's face was enough for me to know that the dash from work had really been worth it. All the little ones in their Disney costumes were lapping it up.

The Disney on Ice Magical Ice Festival was just that and I am sure it will prove just as popular on the rest of its UK tour. **SA**

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Recycle your rubbish for chance to win vouchers

How do you fancy winning shopping vouchers for using your blue lid recycling bin?

Everyone in Sandwell who uses their blue lid recycling bin has a chance to win up to £100 of shopping vouchers with our new Picture BINGo game, starting later this month.

Following last year's food waste BINGo, the new competition focuses on items you can recycle in your blue lid bin.

The idea is to encourage people to use their recycling bin and think more about the household waste we can all recycle.

We know people use their blue lid bins but sometimes they put in items that can't be recycled. We hope the new Picture BINGo game will highlight the range and types of items that can be recycled such as:

- plastic bottles
- glass bottles and jars
- empty aerosols, foil trays,
- empty cleaning product bottles
- plastic punnets
- cans and tins
- paper and cardboard.

So, if you live in Sandwell and you have wheelie bins, look out for your Picture BINGo card which will be stuck to your bin



Mascot – Captain Recyclo



Eyes down for a full house – or should that be an empty one? Get ready for Picture BINGo



Match pictures in the game to win up to £100 in vouchers

some time between April 13-27. The game starts the week beginning April 27 and it runs for 12 weeks.

Each BINGo card has 15 pictures of items you can recycle in your blue lid bin.

Every week we'll release a picture of one of these items on our website, on Facebook and Twitter, in the local press, by email, phone and text.

If the item in the picture is also on your card, you can mark it off.

If you match four pictures, you win a £20 shopping voucher. For eight matching pictures,

you'll get a £50 voucher and the top prize of a £100 voucher for matching 12 items.

So please look out for your Picture BINGo card which will be stuck on your bin over the next few weeks, and tick off those pictures for a chance to win. Good luck.

Jason Holtom, partnership director for Serco said: "Residents told us what they liked about the BINGo scheme from last year and we've tried to go one better and improve it with more prizes."

"There are also more ways to get involved and the easy picture

theme which will help residents recycle more as they play."

The money for the scheme, which aims to increase Sandwell's recycling rate, has come from the Department for Communities and Local Government. The scheme is run by Sandwell Council and waste partner Serco.

The game is free to play and players must be aged 18 or over, must live in Sandwell and must be using the council's blue lid recycling service. The scheme does not include flats.

Winners will receive prizes provided they have been using their

recycling blue lid bin correctly before prizes are issued.

An enquiry line – 0121 569 6884 – will be open from 9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday, from Monday 27 April onwards – you'll need to call this number if you win to claim your prize.

For more information about Picture BINGo go to the website at www.sandwell.gov.uk/bingo

● To see the BINGo picture each week, like us on Facebook – search for "Sandwell" or go to the website www.facebook.com/sandwellcouncil and follow on Twitter @sandwellcouncil

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Pit Bank wenches, Blue Fly Pit, Wednesbury, circa 1890



Oldbury branch of Palethorpes butchers circa 1900



Workers at Palethorpes sausage factory, in Tipton, 1900



Chainmakers pictured circa 1910



Heavy and dirty work – Men at work at Noah Hingley & Sons, Netherton in 1954

Rich industrial heritage is laid bare at exhibition

THE full extent of the Black Country's rich industrial heritage is laid bare in a stunning new exhibition at the Black Country Living Museum.

From the glow of blast furnaces, to a bustling Walsall High Street at the turn of the century, the region's past is brought to the fore at the entrance to the popular Dudley attraction.

The revamped reception features a series of giant images depicting Black Country life through the ages, culminating with a five-minute film in a new 'cinema pod'.

Pipes

There are images of coal-blackened men with pipes hanging from their mouths, children playing in the streets between back-to-backs and of women working at mines. The project has taken three months to complete and replaces the attraction's previous 'Hall of Fame' exhibition.

The stunning pictures offer visitors a snapshot of life in the region from

MEMORY LANE

By Peter Madeley

the 18th century onwards. They include a print by renowned artist and poet Edwin Butler Bayliss, whose paintings depict the Black Country as a smoke-filled engineering heartland.

Many of the region's famous businesses are also represented. They include a branch of Palethorpes butchers in Oldbury, complete with a large advertisement, proudly boasting: 'Best Pork Goods'. The inner workings of the Palethorpes sausage factory in Tipton are shown in another image.

Workers at Wednesbury's famous Spear and Jackson factory in the 1960s are shown in another exhibit, while a stunning monochrome image shows a line of staff at the Revo metal polishing shop in Tipton.

The sprawling Guy Motors Fallings Park Works in Wolverhampton is also displayed.

Another image on display illustrates how the region's industrial exploits were lauded far beyond the bounda-

ries of the Black Country. It shows a picture from the Illustrated London News in 1866 depicting dozens of smokestacks billowing over a landscape packed with factories.

But it's not all grim and industrial, with one picture showing Wolverhampton's beautifully landscaped West Park at its finest, as mothers stroll alongside the pond with their babies in prams.

Walsall's busy High Street is depicted in a photograph taken in 1908, complete with the imposing figure of St Matthew's Church looming in the background.

Traditional

There's also a nod to how the BCLM has preserved the traditional industrial practices of the area.

Last November the museum was given permission for a new school entrance intended to cut queues. The building will be near the new Dudley Archives. For more information on the BCLM and details of events visit belm.co.uk/

*To watch the video visit native-monster.com



Back breaking – pushing coal home in the 1950s



Guy Motors, Fallings Park Works, Wolverhampton pictured in the 1920s

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No regrets, says IDS, over 'bedroom tax'



Former Conservative leader Iain Duncan Smith campaigning in Netherton with Dudley South candidate Mike Wood

IAIN Duncan Smith does not even pause when he is asked if he has any regrets over the so-called 'bedroom tax'.

"No. Not at all." The work and pensions secretary stands out from the crowd in the blazing sunshine of Netherton, wearing a long, wool overcoat. He led the Conservatives for less than two years during the then unshakeable popularity of Tony Blair. Now he is trying to convince people to stick with the Tories in Dudley South, a key marginal seat.

Mr Duncan Smith has presided over some of the most difficult decisions of the coalition government, in terms of cutting the welfare bill. The Tories imposed a cut in housing benefit for council and social housing tenants who have one or more 'spare' bedrooms. The Conservatives call it the removal of the 'spare room subsidy'.

Mr Duncan Smith says it has saved £1 billion on the benefits bill. Others say it has driven people to despair and even suicide. But asked if he had any regrets about the change Mr Duncan Smith says: "No. Not at all. What I faced when I walked through the door was a housing benefits bill that had doubled over the last 10 years of the Labour government. It was set to rise by £6 billion.

"Let's get that in context. It was money that taxpayers have to pay all the time. Part of it was poor use of housing, some people living in homes they weren't occupying all of and others living in overcrowded accommodation.

"Labour introduced this policy themselves. They introduced it for people in the private rented sector who were social tenants. We've simply extended it."

In Dudley South the incumbent MP Chris Kelly stood down after one term. Now Pedmore and Stourbridge East councillor Mike Wood will try to hold it. Also standing are Labour's Natasha Millward, Vicky Duckworth of the Greens, Paul Brothwood of UKIP and Martin Turner for the Liberal Democrats.

Candidate quits UKIP just days before deadline

AN election candidate in Dudley quit UKIP just days before the deadline for nominations.

Adrian Turner had been expected to stand as a UKIP candidate in the Dudley Council elections taking place on May 7. But the 50-year-old resigned from the party earlier this month and will now fight to be elected as an Independent candidate.

Mr Turner, a former Conservative councillor, will contest the Hayley Green and Cradley South seat being vacated by his father, Ken.

He claimed the Dudley branch of UKIP had become too focused on the town

Nigel has tonic for the troops in Himley speech

NIGEL Farage vowed to increase spending on the Armed Forces by £16 billion as he put troops and veterans centre stage on the campaign trail in the Black Country.

Speaking at Himley Hall last week, the UKIP leader said the party would commit to spending two per cent of gross domestic product on defence – the NATO benchmark – and restore the defence budget to pre-2010 levels.

He also said the party would create a specialist Veterans' Minister who will ensure that current veterans and future troops returning from conflict receive specialist support.

Mr Farage said: "The Westminster parties are not interested in defence, they do not see any votes in it. People in this country do care about defence, about our ability as a nation to defend ourselves.

"About our ability as a nation to defend our commitments around the world – per-

By Rob Gollidge & Rob Cox

haps with the Falklands being to the fore-most in many people's minds. So people do care hugely about, and perhaps they care even more about, the well-being of the men and women that serve in our armed forces and especially the way in which they are treated.

"UKIP says defence really does matter and it is very important – it should be a much bigger part of this election campaign than it currently is."

Mr Farage, who joined veterans for afternoon tea, said UKIP backed calls for a national service medal so all men and women who served in the Armed Forces could 'stand proud' at Remembrance Services regardless of rank or length of service.

Troops who have served more than 12 years would be offered jobs in the police force, prison service and the borders agency. The party said it would build at

least one forces' hospital and several hostels for homeless ex-servicemen.

Mr Farage added: "It is estimated that one in 10 of those on the streets are former servicemen or women who have fallen on hard times and dependent on alcohol. It is our duty to support them."

Mr Farage took to the podium with Dudley North candidate Bill Etheridge and rejected criticism about plans to pay for the defence budget boost via cuts to international aid, insisting 'defence of the realm' was the first priority.

Speaking to reporters outside Himley Hall, Mr Farage hit back at the Prime Minister who had issued a call for UKIP voters to 'come home' to the Conservatives. He said: "Firstly doesn't understand that more than half our voters have never voted Conservative and would never vote Conservative. Secondly he said this is not the time to protest – he doesn't get it. They are not voting UKIP to protest but they are voting UKIP because they agree with it."



Nigel Farage poses for a selfie at Himley Hall

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Faulty breaks on van led to driver death crash tragedy

A DELIVERY driver who was killed in a crash with a police car at a crossroads was driving a van with faulty brakes, an inquest has heard.

Ajay Sagar became trapped under his Mercedes Sprinter after he was thrown from the van on impact with the marked Ford S Max in Coseley. The 29-year-old, of Ryddon Square, Hill Top, West Bromwich, died at the scene despite the efforts of paramedics and passers-by.

Extra support to help young get best start

PARENTS are being encouraged to apply for Government funding to help their three or four year old children get the best start.

Children of that age who attend a school nursery, day nursery, child-minder or pre-school in Dudley could be entitled to extra support.

Parents or carers who are in receipt of certain benefits, or who have children who have been in care or left care through adoption or child arrangement orders, may be eligible.

Tony Oakman, Dudley Council's strategic director for people, said: "I would encourage parents who think they are eligible to apply for the government funding. It can be used in many ways by your child's education provider to give your child a little extra help and get prepared for full time school and the best start in life."

Call (01384) 814291 or email EYPP@dudley.gov.uk

An investigation found defects on the van's brakes, which experts said were a major contributory factor to the crash.

It is also believed Mr Sagar was not wearing a seatbelt. The officer who was driving the police car, Pc Dean Meese, was a witness at Mr Sagar's inquest at Smethwick Council House on Monday. He said he was returning home at around 11am on October 21 along Central Drive when he approached the crossroads where Bridge Street meets Martin Street.

He said became aware of the white Mercedes Sprinter van driven by Mr Agar, coming from Bridge Street. Pc Meese said he did not stop immediately as he had right of way, but seeing the van was not slowing, braked hard, but was unable to avoid the collision.

Investigators said they did not believe Mr Sagar was speeding as a GPS tracker showed he was travelling at 22mph. Pc Meese said: "I knew impact was inevitable. I resigned myself to the fact I was probably going to die."

Mr Sagar had worked as a delivery driver for around three months for West Bromwich-based company Munchies, delivering sandwiches. His wife of five years Sheweta Sagar described him as a 'really good man'. Senior Black Country coroner Zafar Saddique recorded a verdict of death by road traffic collision.

Museum's rare canal boat restored



On board the restored Birchills 'joey' boat is Bob Downing from the Black Country Living Museum

IT'S one of the last surviving boats of its kind and now it's been brought back to life with the help of donations.

Birchills — a rare Joey or 'day boat' — has been repaired and docked at the Black Country Living Museum. It follows an appeal which raised £62,000 in donations to fund the specialist restoration work.

The boat was built in 1953 by Ernest Thomas of Walsall and worked from Walsall locks to nearby Birchills

Power Station. It was one of the last wooden day boats built and is the only surviving example with a day cabin. A Joey boat was horse-drawn and not normally lived on. These vessels were the 'workhorses' of the Birmingham and Black Country canal network.

The boat's restoration has received an industry award after specialists were required to undertake a substantial programme of work, including the replacement of a rotten stern post and

planking. Care was taken to preserve evidence of traditional construction techniques.

When the fundraising was launched in 2012, Birchills was identified as the most important in the museum's collection of 16 boats. The museum's David Eveleigh said: "Thanks to those who donated we've been able to preserve an important part of the region's heritage. The boat is now on site for visitors to enjoy."

Wall of glass postcards to go on display

A WALL made from more than 180 glass postcards will be a centrepiece of a festival in the Black Country.

The artwork will be displayed at the 2015 International Festival of Glass in Stourbridge next month.

Members of the Contemporary Glass Society have created the pieces to celebrate both the festival itself and pay tribute to the old-fashioned picture postcard.

Keeping faithful to the idea of sharing a message or story with the recipient each piece tells a tale in the space of just 10cm x 15cm. Each postcard in the exhibition will go on sale with prices ranging from £50 to £150.

The exhibition runs from May 29 to June 28. Admission to the exhibition is free, with the exception of May 28 to 31 when the Ruskin Glass Centre charges an admission fee.

Wish You Were Here is among scores of exhibitions, workshops and events taking place in Stourbridge's historic glass quarter.

Other exhibitions include pieces from renowned international glass artists, installations and even celebrity doodles turned into glass.

Victoria Scholes, former chairman of Contemporary Glass Society, said: "Postcards have a long and fascinating history."

Community hub plan for Methodist church

AMBITIOUS plans to expand a Cradley church and transform it into a community hub have been given the green light.

Providence Methodist Church will create a new entrance at the building, in Colley Orchard, including an entrance ramp.

A 19th century former Sunday school building will be brought back into use and flats will be created on disused land.

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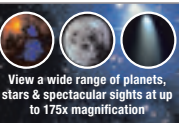
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Musical Manford

– Page 21



Pun king

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 Call 01902 572090

The Producers
 Mon, Tue, Wed at 7.30pm, Wed at 2.30pm, £15 - £41.40
 New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, B5 4DS
 Call 0844 871 3011

Feed The Beast
 Fri, Sat at 7.45pm, Mon, Wed at 7.45pm, Tue at 7pm, £12 - £20
 Birmingham Repertory Theatre, B1 2EP
 Call 0121 236 4455

First Stages - By The Riverbank
 Sat at 11.30am, 2pm, 3.30pm, £2 - £9
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Bouncers and Shakers
 Fri, Sat at 7.45pm, Mon, Wed at 7.45pm, Tue at 2.45pm, £10 - £11
 The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham, B16 8AE
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Hamlet
 Fri, Sat at 7.30pm, £10.50
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The Picture of Dorian Gray
 Sat at 3pm, 7.30pm, £5 - £10
 Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, WV1 1SE. Call 01902 321321

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Sandpiper Folk Club Night
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 Pigot Arms, Patterning WV6 7BQ
 Call 01902 700207

Vin Garbutt
 Sat at 7.30pm, £12.50
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 Sun at 12.30pm, Tue at 8.30pm, Free
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Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star

Tim Tim cheery with a fine Vine



Punmeister Tim Vine performs at the Symphony Hall as part of his first UK tour in four years next week

COMEDIAN Tim Vine has set out on his first stand-up tour in four years, including a gig at the Symphony Hall, Birmingham, on Wednesday (April 22).

The punslinger returns with lots of new jokes, silly songs and some twitchy dancing. He does warn that the show will contain wobbly props, a reference to a panda and a song about getting water in your ear when you

go swimming. And those who can't make the Birmingham date get a second chance to catch Tim by travelling up the M54 for his Shrewsbury show at Theatre Severn on June 3.

It is shaping up to be a classic week for comedy with TV comedy panel regular Andy Parsons at the Wulfrun Hall, Wolverhampton, on Thursday (April 23) on his Live and Unleashed But Naturally Cautious Tour. Mock

The Week's Stewart Francis promises to be Pun Gent when he plays the Wulfrun Hall on Friday, April 24.

That hair-raising master of the one liner, Milton Jones, brings his Temple of Daft show to Wolverhampton Civic Hall tomorrow (Friday). He returns to the region to play Oakengates Town Hall in Telford on June 4, Birmingham's Symphony Hall on June 5 and Dudley Town Hall on October 5.

First UK tour for Producers

TWO of Britain's best loved comedians, Jason Manford and Phill Jupitus, join forces in comedy musical The Producers, based on the outrageous Mel Brooks movie.

Add the unpredictable force of nature that is dance celebrity Louie Spence to the mix, then one has the ingredients for an hilarious night out when the show, helmed by acclaimed Top Hat director Matthew White, comes to Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre.

Now on its first UK tour, the show that took Broadway and the West End by storm has won a record-breaking 12 Tony Awards and three Olivier Awards.

It tells the story impoverished New York producer Max Bialystock (played by Cory English, reprising his West End role) who recruits downtrodden accountant Leo Bloom (Manford) to help him pull off Broadway's greatest scam by over investing in a show that's intended to be a flop. Together they aim to produce the worst show in history and run away to Rio with millions, but then the musical written by a deranged Nazi Franz Liebkind (Phill Jupitus), Springtime For Hitler, turns out to be a hit.

Olivier Award winning actor David Bedella will play the flamboyant director Roger De Bris chosen by Max Bialystock in an attempt to ensure Springtime for Hitler is a flop. Renowned dancer, choreographer and television personality Spence plays his equally flamboyant assistant Carmen Ghia.

The Producers will be goosestepping its stuff at the Alex from Monday to Saturday.



"Ingredients for an hilarious night out"

City venues stage Classical concerts

RENOWNED pianist Cédric Tiberghien joins Edward Gardner and the CBSO for a celebration of some of Felix Mendelssohn's best-loved works at the Symphony Hall in Birmingham.

They will perform two concerts together, today (Thursday) at 2.15pm, and an evening concert on Saturday from 7pm.

The Anglo-Welsh Canoldir Choir return to Birmingham Town Hall on Saturday at 7pm. Russia's Borodin Quartet perform works by Shostakovich and Beethoven at the Town Hall on Tuesday, 7.30pm.

Soprano April Fredrick and Orchestra of the Swan perform on Wednesday at 2.30pm at Birmingham Town Hall.

Ant music as Adam makes 80s return

SOUTH Carolina outfit Hey-rocco bring their infectious grunge-pop to the Rainbow in Digbeth on Sunday as support for Scottish rockers The Xcarts.

Adam Ant returns to his punk album Dirk Wears White Sox and his 80s hits at Wolverhampton's Slade Rooms tonight (Thursday). Rock veterans UFO are at the Wulfrun Hall on Saturday and Status Quo bring their Aquostic Tour to Wolverhampton Civic Hall on April 23.

Yes guitarist Steve Howe is at the Robin 2 in Bilston tonight and the same venue hosts 70s prog rockers Curved Air with singer Sonja Kristina on Sunday.

Wilde work given supernatural twist

OSCAR Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray is given a supernatural twist by European Arts Company. It is on at the Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, on Saturday at 3pm and 7.30pm.

Ten Downing Street comes under the spotlight in Steve Thompson's Feed The Beast at Birmingham Rep Studio Theatre from tonight until May 2, with a cast including Gerald Kyd and Kacey Ainsworth.

A dance work looking at how the human body responds to war, 5 Soldiers, choreographed by Rosie Kay, is staged with the audience also on the main stage at the Birmingham Rep, from April 23 to 25.

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The world's your oyster - Fish Church, Gothenburg, is laden with all sorts of fresh produce



Karen Bowerman with cod on a fishing trip

Fishy tales as we are led on a totally Scandilicious foodie tour

FOR the guy that's the equivalent of Gordon Ramsay in the Danish version of Hell's Kitchen, chef Wassim Hallal seems a surprisingly agreeable chap.

He arrives at his new deli, sporting a flat cap and the broadest of grins, and welcomes us, wholeheartedly, to Denmark.

Maybe my delight in his smorrebrod (Danish open sandwiches) has something to do with this, but even when my foodie companion, Bill, begins drilling him on sarnie specifics he's still patient and polite.

Bill and I are on a whistle-stop Scandi food tour. We've got three days to visit three cities in three countries: Sweden, Norway and Denmark.

We meet Hallal in Aarhus, on the country's east coast. His deli, F-Høj, has a classy

By Karen Bowerman

cosiness. Our open sandwiches are heaped with toppings: smoked salmon with avocado puree, smoked cheese and fresh horseradish; potato and pear with mustard and honey; and eggs and crayfish with grapes and salsify.

Focusing on fresh, seasonal produce is at the heart of New Nordic Cuisine. It's led to a renaissance of Scandinavian classics, including smorrebrod, which is now being seen, and served, in a new light.

Using organic, regional ingredients is also the aim of Nordisk Spisehus, where Bill and I have dinner. The restaurant serves signature dishes from Michelin-starred establishments. "We get the thumbs up before we copy their menus," a waitress reassures me.

I leave, wondering if Nordisk needs to be more courageous. Given its dishes seem to

hold their own in a Michelin-starred menu, does the kitchen really need to rely so heavily on the creativity of others?

The next morning Bill and I catch a ferry to Sweden's west coast city of Gothenburg. It's known for its coffee culture but we're heading to the Fish Church. It's actually a 19th century fish market in a building inspired by Norway's wooden stave churches that were built without pillars.

Variety

The 'aisle' is laden with fresh lobster, shrimp and salmon. But it's the variety of pickled herring that catches my eye. Choices include oregano and pink peppercorn, carrot and juniper and onion and bay leaves. I try herring and redcurrant, expecting the sour taste of vinegar, but instead, the fish is soft and almost creamy, with the fruit giving it a fabulous kick. On a mezza-

nine at the far end of the market is Gabriel, where we're having lunch. It's run by chef Johan Malm, who won the World Oyster Opening Championships in 2010.

We eat sumptuously; fresh oysters from Grebbestad (two hours north of Gothenburg), the thickest of fish soups with sweet prawns and fish that's almost al dente, and grilled plaice with browned butter and potatoes.

On our final day, we forego fine dining for fishing. At Ersfjordbotn, a small hamlet 15km west of Tromsø, we meet Trond Lørentzen, whose family runs a fish

Trond's wife is peeling potatoes. We sit down to the freshest cod I've ever tasted.

* Karen Bowerman was a guest of the Danish, Swedish and Norwegian tourist boards. Visit www.visitdenmark.co.uk, www.visitsweden.com and www.visitnorway.com

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CHOICE



George Eads

CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Channel 5, 10.10pm)

The team learns the suspect in the Gig Harbour killings is being released from jail due to lack of evidence, and DB's daughter Maya asks her father if she can return to Seattle because she has been having nightmares about the case. A planned airport escort goes awry when her assigned officers are drawn to a nearby shooting, and private investigator Daniel Shaw shows up, claiming he is Maya's new driver. Meanwhile, Hodges traces the violin strings used in the murders to a woman named Rebecca Lowell, and her home yields shocking evidence. Ted Danson, Elisabeth Shue, George Eads, Jorja Fox, Eric Szmanda, Robert David Hall, Wallace Langham, Elisabeth Harnois and Elise Luthman star.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Paul Hollywood's Bread. (R) **12.00** BBC News; Weather. **12.10** Football Focus. **1.00** Live Gymnastics. The 2015 European Artistic Gymnastics Individual Championships. **3.30** Live Formula 1: Bahrain Grand Prix - Qualifying. Coverage from the Bahrain International Circuit, Sakhir (Start-time 4.00pm). **5.05** Match of the Day Live. Arsenal v Reading (Kick-off 5.20pm). **7.25** BBC News. **7.35** Regional Programme. **7.45** Atlatlan. Jason has been sentenced to death and it seems no one will be able to save him - until Hercules comes up with a plan that will require him to make a huge personal sacrifice. **8.30** The National Lottery: In It to Win It. Dale Winford presents the quiz in which up to five contestants answer questions to scoop a big cash prize. Only those in the winners' row will have a chance of taking home the loot, so they will need to get all the answers right - as well as a little bit of luck on their side. Including the Lotto and Thunderball draws, hosted by Kate Garraway. **9.20** Casualty. A construction worker outside the hospital loses control of his digger, taking out the power in the ED and half-burying a young woman - who just happens to be his own daughter who had come to see him. Alfred is rushed in with pneumonia and when Connie insists the team don't intervene, Rita becomes suspicious. Cal receives a phone call from a distressed Taylor and finds her in a public toilet with a knife in her leg, having got mixed up with the wrong people. It's a bad wound and she is refusing to go to hospital, so he realises he needs Ethan's help. But things don't quite work out as expected. **10.10** BBC News; Weather. **10.30** Match of the Day. Gabby Logan presents highlights of the latest Premier League clashes, including Chelsea v Manchester United and Leicester City v Swansea City; National Lottery Update. **11.50** The Football League Show. Manish Bhasin presents highlights and all the goals from the latest fixtures. **1.10** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.15** BBC News.

BBC2

6.25 Film: The Silver Darlings. (1947) **7.45** Film: Animal Farm. (1954) **9.00** FA Cup Rewind: Semi-Final Classics. **10.00** Live Snooker: The World Championship. **11.55** Michel Roux's Service. (R) **12.55** Live Formula 1: Bahrain Grand Prix - Third Practice. Coverage from the Bahrain International Circuit, Sakhir. **2.05** Live Snooker: The World Championship. The afternoon session on day one at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield. **4.30** Final Score. **5.15** Escape to the Continent. **5.45** Flog It! (R) **6.30** Gardeners' World. Monty Don gives his borders a boost at Longmeadow, while James Alexander-Sinclair heads to Borde Hill Garden in West Sussex to visit its collection of award-winning magnolias. (R) **7.00** Live Snooker: The World Championship. The concluding session on the opening day of the ranking tournament at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, where the first-round match involving Mark Selby reaches a conclusion. **8.00** Dad's Army. Mainwaring tries to talk Frazer into depositing his hoard of gold sovereigns in a safe place - his own bank. Vintage comedy, with Arthur Lowe and John Laurie. (R) **8.30** Film: Jane Eyre. (2011) A girl raised in misery by her cruel aunt grows up to become a governess, and is sent to the estate of a mysterious Yorkshire landowner. Despite being disturbed by strange goings-on in the house, she falls in love with her brooding employer, only to discover he is concealing a terrible secret. Period drama based on Charlotte Brontë's novel, starring Mia Wasikowska, Michael Fassbender and Judi Dench. **10.20** QI XL. Extended edition. Jo Brand, Colin Lane, David Mitchell and Alan Davies attempt to answer host Stephen Fry's questions on the theme of landmarks. Last in the series. **11.05** Snooker: The World Championship. Highlights of the evening session on the opening day at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, where two first-round matches were scheduled. **11.55** Snooker: World Championship Extra. Extended highlights. **1.55** Film: Father of My Children. (2009) **3.45** Sign Zone: Antiques Roadshow. (R) **4.45** The Truth About Calories. (R) **5.45** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITY: Bottom Knockout Street. **6.10** Bottom Knockout Street. (R) **6.20** Bottom Knockout Street. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Animals. (R) **7.15** Scooby. (R) **7.30** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.35** Hulk and the Agents of Smash. **8.30** Thunderbirds Are Go. **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **10.20** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **11.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.30** ITV News; Weather. **12.35** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **1.40** Doc Martin. (R) **2.40** Film: Crocodile Dundee in Los Angeles. (2001) Comedy adventure sequel, starring Paul Hogan. **4.30** The Unforgettable Joan Sims. (R) **5.00** Off Their Rockers. (R) **5.30** Regional Programme; Weather. **5.45** ITV News; Weather. **6.00** New You've Been Framed! A-Z of Growing Up. Harry Hill presents classic videos featuring youngsters across the world as he unveils his guidebook to growing up, from toddlers to teens. **7.00** Ninja Warrior UK. Contenders from across the nation test their strength, speed and courage in the second heat of the obstacle-course challenge, all hoping to progress to the semi-finals. **8.00** Britain's Got Talent. The annual search for a star continues as more auditionees try to win over Simon Cowell, David Walliams, Amanda Holden and Alesha Dixon with their talents. The acts all have their eyes on the prize of £250,000 and a slot at this year's Royal Variety Performance, but first they must secure a place in the live semi-finals. And with the return of the golden buzzers, the judges, as well as hosts Ant and Dec, each have the power to send one act straight through, regardless of anyone else's opinion. **9.15** Play to the Whistle. Captains Bradley Walsh and Frank Lampard are joined by guests Sean Lock, Graeme Swann, Alex Scott and Romesh Ranganathan. Holly Willoughby hosts the sports-based comedy panel show. **10.00** ITV News; Weather. **11.15** Film: Red Heat. (1988) A Russian detective and a Chicago cop put aside their mutual mistrust to catch an escaped Soviet drug baron. Action thriller, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger. **12.10** Jackpot247. **3.00** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) **3.40** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.35 FIM Superbike World Championship. **7.05** Brighton Marathon. **8.00** The Morning Line. **9.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **10.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **10.30** Frasier. (R) **11.00** Frasier. (R) **11.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.30** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD. (R) **1.30** Channel 4 Racing featuring the Scottish Grand National from Ayr, and Newbury. **4.10** Come Dine with Me. (R) **6.15** Come Dine with Me. Outspoken hairdresser Patrick McCurray hosts the final party in Sutton Coldfield, and prepares a scallop starter and a classic beef Wellington. (R) **6.45** Channel 4 News. **7.00** Walking Through History: Northumbria. Tony Robinson explores the history of the ancient kingdom on a walk from Melrose in the Scottish Borders to Holy Island off the coast of Northumberland. Over five days, he goes on the trail of one of Northumbria's greatest sons - Saint Cuthbert. Through the Tweed Valley and across the Cheviot Hills, it's a journey through a murky history laden with myth. However, by investigating the communities, power bases and landscape of seventh-century Northumbria, Tony aims to understand the pagan land in which Cuthbert spread his simple brand of Celtic Christianity. (R) **8.00** The World's Most Extreme. The 10 most dangerous and extraordinary bridges around the world, including the Millau Viaduct in southern France, a popular base-jumping spot for thrill-seekers. **9.00** Film: X-Men: First Class. (2011) Telepathic mutant Charles Xavier forms the first generation of the superhero team in the 1960s. Their battle with a Nazi war criminal manipulating the world toward nuclear war gradually drives a wedge between Xavier and his ally Magneto, leading them to become deadly enemies. Superhero adventure prequel, starring James McAvoy. **11.40** Film: In Fear. (2013) Horror, starring Iain De Caestecker. **1.15** Alan Carr: Chatty Man. (R) **2.10** Holyoaks. (R) **4.15** Hugh's 3 Good Things: Best Bites. **4.30** Double Your House for Half the Money. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** Ice Road Truckers. (R) **11.30** Ice Road Truckers. (R) **12.25** Ice Road Truckers. (R) **1.25** Police Interceptors. (R) **2.25** Police Interceptors. (R) **3.25** Film: Columbo: Make Me a Perfect Murder. (1978) **5.25** The Nightmarer Neighbour Next Door. (R) **6.20** Britain's Horror Homes. A woman from the Norfolk village of Happisburgh whose house had to be demolished after coastal erosion left it suspended in mid-air on the edge of a cliff. (R) **7.10** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. The return of the documentary giving an insight into the world of debt collection from the perspectives of debtors, creditors and those who collect the payments. Brian and Graham have been warned to expect trouble as they evict some tenants from a south London flat, one of whom has a reputation for violence. Everything goes smoothly until the enforcement agents make a shocking discovery in a child's bedroom. Paul and Steve head to Slough to collect wages owed to a freelance worker, but the debtor is less than happy to find the high-court enforcement officers on his doorstep and things get physical. (R) **8.10** 5 News Weekend. **8.15** NCIS. The team tries to prove Ziva had nothing to do with a political assassination carried out by her former Mossad partner - but has to tackle the case without Gibbs's guidance. (R) **9.10** NCIS. Gibbs and the team attend the funeral of a fallen colleague before identifying the man they believe to be the port-to-port killer, and rushing to apprehend him. (R) **10.10** CSI: Crime Scene Investigation. The team learns the suspect in the Gig Harbour killings is being released from jail due to lack of evidence, and DB's daughter Maya asks her father if she can return to Seattle. **11.10** Law & Order: Special Victims Unit. A single murder quickly becomes a case involving three bodies, leaving Benson and Stabler hunting a killer whose motives seemingly stem from a misguided sense of righteousness. (R) **12.05** SuperCasino. **3.10** The Gadget Show. (R) **4.00** 200 Nips & Tucks and I Want More! (R) **4.50** Make It Big. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three **7.00** Film: Chicken Run (2000) **8.20** Top Gear **9.30** Tatau **10.10** Happy Valley **11.10** Family Guy **12.10** Tatau **2.00** Bluestone 42 **2.30** Killer Magic **3.00** Siblings **4.00** Close **BBC Four** **7.00** Ice Age Giants **8.00** Wild China **9.00** Inspector Montalbano **10.55** John Denver: Country Boy **11.55** John Denver at Wembley Arena **12.35** An Evening with Glen Campbell **1.55** Sounds of the Eighties **2.10** The Sky at Night **2.50** Wild China **3.50** Close **ITV2** **11.00** Britain's Got Talent **12.20** Britain's Got More Talent **1.25** The Hot Desk: Ed Sheeran **1.40** Film: Honey (2003) **3.30** Film: Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure (1989) **5.20** Mr Bean **6.30** Film: Apollo 13 (1995) **9.15** Britain's Got More Talent **10.15** Celebrity Juice **11.05** Britain's Got Talent **12.20** Britain's Got More Talent **1.20** Hell's Kitchen **2.10** Crazy Beaches **2.35** Life's Funniest Moments **2.55** Teleshopping **5.55** ITV2 Nightscreen **ITV3** **11.55** Film: Gosford Park (2001) **2.35** Inspector Morse **4.55** Agatha Christie's Marple **7.00** Doc Martin **8.00** Foyle's War **10.00** Inspector Morse **12.15** A Touch of Frost **12.30** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping **ITV4** **12.55** Counting Cars **1.50** Film: The Appaloosa (1966) **3.55** Film: The War Wagon (1967) **6.00** Storage Wars **7.00** Shed and Buried **8.00** River Monsters **9.00** Film: Born on the Fourth of July (1989) **11.50** Film: Inside Man (2006) **2.20** Bonanza **2.45** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping **E4** **11.00** Melissa & Joey **12.00** Baby Daddy **1.00** How I Met Your Mother **2.00** Film: Hop (2011) **4.00** Made in Chelsea **5.00** How I Met Your Mother **6.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: Sleepy Hollow (1999) **11.15** The Big Bang Theory **12.15** The Inbetweeners **1.20** Rude Tube **2.25** The 100 **3.10** How I Met Your Mother **3.55** 2 Broke Girls **4.20** How I Met Your Mother **4.40** Make It or Break It **5.25** Rude(ish) Tube **Film4** **11.00** That Riviera Touch (1966) **1.00** K9: K9 (1978) **3.50** A Knight's Tale (2001) **6.35** Water for Elephants (2011) **9.00** The Guard (2011) Comedy thriller, with Brendan Gleeson and Don Cheadle. **10.55** The Raven (2012) **1.05** Chinatown (1974) **3.50** Close

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DIGITAL



11.55 Film: The Uninvited. (2009)
Thriller, starring Emily Browning.
1.15 Weather for the Week Ahead. 1.20
RBC News

Championship.
12.35 Snooker: World Championship
 Extra. **2.35** Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R)
3.35 Holby City. (R) **4.35** The Ladykillers
 Pest Detectives. (R) **5.35** This Is BBC
 Two.

12.15 The Store. **2.30** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) **3.15** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

12.30 The Secret Millionaire. (R) **1.25**
Film: Mirch Masala. (1987) **3.30** Come
 Dine with Me. (R) **5.45** Kirstie's Vintage
 Gems.

10.55 Film: Drive Angry. (2011) A man breaks out of Hell to track down the cult leader who has murdered his daughter and plans to sacrifice her baby. Fantasy thriller, starring Nicolas Cage and Amber Heard.

12.50 Jackass. (R) **1.15** SuperCasino.

3.10 2,000 Tattoos, 40 Piercings and a Pickled Ear. (R) **4.00** House Doctor. (R)

4.25 Make It Big. (R) **5.15** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.40** Roary the Racino Car. (R)

E4

1.00 **Revenge 2.00 Film:** Hairspray (2007) **4.20** **Rude (ish)** Tube Shorts **4.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **5.00** **The Big Bang Theory 8.00 Film:** Star Trek: Insurrection (1998) **10.05** Virtually Famous **10.55** **The Intebewners 11.55** **The Big Bang Theory 12.55** **Bodyshockers:** Nips, Tucks and Tattoos **1.55** **The 100** **2.50** **Rules of Engagement 3.30** **Hollyoaks**

Film4

11.00 **The Mistress of Spices** (2005) **1.00** **Meet Dave** (2008) **2.50** **Carry On Behind** (1975) **4.40** **Cocoon:** The Return (1988) **6.55** **The Perks of Being a Wallflower** (2012) **9.00** **Brooklyn City** (2013) **11.10** **The Iceman** (2012) **1.15** **Eccentricities of a Blonde-haired Girl** (2009) **2.30** **Alamar** (2009) **4.00** **Close**

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Lock Up, Channel 5, 10.55pm
A convict is transferred to a maximum security prison, where he falls foul of a sadistic warden with a grudge against him. Thriller, starring Sylvester Stallone and Donald Sutherland. (1989)

TUESDAY
In the Electric Mist, BBC1, 11.45pm
A recovering alcoholic detective investigates the discovery of a body in a swamp, where he witnessed a murder as a boy. As he sets out to prove a local gangster is involved in a more recent killing, he begins having visions of ghostly Confederate soldiers. Mystery, starring Tommy Lee Jones and John Goodman. (2009)

WEDNESDAY
A detective is sent to Alaska to investigate a murder during a month when the sun does not set. Sleep deprivation starts to take its toll, and he accidentally shoots his partner dead. He tries to cover it up, but the criminal they were hunting has seen everything and blackmails the cop into helping him escape justice. Thriller directed by Christopher Nolan, starring Al Pacino, Robin Williams and Hilary Swank. (2002)



Withnail & I, Friday, Channel 4, 12.20am

THURSDAY
Deadly Hope, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A fertility doctor trying to recover from the murder of her colleague attends a charity function, where a man she meets is also killed. She realises that she was the intended target in both attacks, and tries to find out who wants her dead and why before anyone else dies. Thriller, starring Alana De La Garza and Sandrine Holt. (2012)

FRIDAY
Withnail & I, Channel 4, 12.20am
Two hard-drinking unemployed actors sharing a gritty flat in late 1960s London think they can escape their miserable existence by decamping to a cottage in the Lake District. But finding no respite from their problems, the less self-destructive of the pair comes to realise he has to leave his friend behind. Cult black comedy, starring Richard E Grant, Paul McGann, Richard Griffiths and Ralph Brown. (1987)

Jason awaits his fate as Hercules plans a rescue

Jack Donnelly was eight years old when his dreams of becoming Batman were put on hold. He and his classmates went to see a school production of *Smile* and Jack realised that's what he wanted to do with the rest of his life. It helped that his folks were in showbusiness. His dad, Tony, was an actor and his mum, Chrissie, was a dancer who also choreographed Bucks Fizz's Eurovision-winning *Making Your Mind Up* dance routine. (There was an argument over which length skirts Cheryl Baker and Jay Aston should wear, so Chrissie came up with the idea of using both, the longer whipped off half way through the routine). Fast forward a few years, and after leaving drama school, Jack and his best friend Joel Mellenger won an improv competition. They started their own company, Chuckleduster, and doors started opening. These days Jack is better known as Jason, the protagonist at the heart of *Atlantis* (BBC1, 7.45pm), and there's no shortage of problems for him here. Our hero has been sentenced to death, and with the might of the High Priests bearing down upon him, it seems nobody can secure his release. While Pasphe tightens her stranglehold on the city, it looks like Jason is doomed, until Hercules comes up with a plan. The show may have gone down a storm with many, but the high production costs eventually led to its own demise. However, some shows have a habit of lingering long after the axe has fallen. So, has he had a lot of interest from across the Pond? "Atlantis went down great over there," Jack enthuses. "I think it was the biggest show they've ever had on BBC America. "To be fair it came right after the Sherlock Christmas special; that might have helped us, but yeah, the viewing figures went down great there, and I think they sold it to 120 countries around the world, which is fantastic." And getting such a high profile in such an influential country is invaluable for any actor. "In terms of my own career and stuff, anything to get noticed in America and open up doors there is brilliant, but we'll see." It doesn't hurt that he recently made the improv football mockumentary *United We Fall*. It started out as a comedy workshop, but once director Gary Sinyor got the money to develop it, that became a movie. "I honestly didn't even expect it to be made into a film," Jack explains while plugging the DVD. "I'm not sure how it was going to work, so a lot of that is down to Gary and the editing." Donnelly wasn't given the chance of a second take. "I had to be in the moment or that was it. And you move forward. You never got to do it again," he explains. For the moment, Ben Affleck may be the new Dark Knight, but Jack still holds a glimmer of hope that one day he'll get to don that iconic cowl. "Unless the Batman thing comes back on the cards, I think I'll stick with acting," he smiles.



Jack Donnelly stars in Atlantis, Saturday, BBC1, 7.45pm

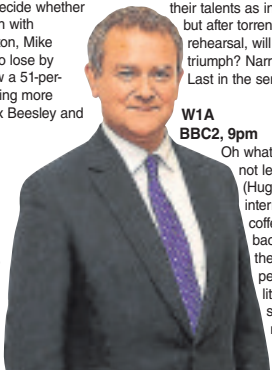
BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Safe House
ITV, 9pm
New series. Former policeman Robert and his wife Katy gave up their city lives after a witness in his care was shot dead, and he's been struggling with his guilt ever since. In an attempt to put the past behind them, the couple now run a guest house in the Lake District. But when old colleague DCI Mark Maxwell suggests the building would work as a safe house, Robert takes in a family who are under threat. It's a chance for him to make use of his detective skills and ensure nothing goes wrong this time. Drama, starring Christopher Eccleston.

TUESDAY
Live UEFA Champions League
ITV, 7.30pm
Mark Pougatch presents coverage of the quarter-final second-leg encounter from the Nou Camp. This is the third time in as many seasons that the Spanish and French giants have been drawn against each other in European football's premier club competition, and the second time they have clashed in the quarter-finals, having previously done so in 2012/13. Both of the matches ended in draws on that occasion, but it was the Catalans who progressed via the away goals rule.

Ordinary Lies
BBC1, 9pm
Sixteen months after Beth's husband Dave went missing, she feels ready to move on – until she receives unexpected news that leaves her reeling. Leaving the kids with her mother-in-law, she travels to Margate – where she is forced to decide whether to leave her old life behind or move on with company boss Mike. Back in Warrington, Mike himself considers how much he has to lose by leaving his wife – with his father-in-law a 51-per-cent holder in the company, he is risking more than just his marriage. Jo Joyner, Max Beesley and Shaun Dooley star. Last in the series.

WEDNESDAY
Give a Pet a Home
ITV, 8pm
Amanda Holden reveals which of last week's celebrity-championed animals have found a new home with viewers, and six more potential pets are put up for adoption at the RSPCA centre in Birmingham. They include Tiger the Bengal cat, who was a shooting victim, and Wally the horse, who fell into a river and swam seven miles to safety.



W1A, Thursday, BBC2, 9pm

THURSDAY
Ice Rink on the Estate
ITV, 9pm
In this final programme, tension, excitement and even romance are in the air as the big show looms. Some of the skaters are chosen to demonstrate their talents as individuals and in pairs, but after torrential rain ruins the dress rehearsal, will the main event be a triumph? Narrated by Suranne Jones. Last in the series.

W1A
BBC2, 9pm
Oh what a glorious series this is, not least because of Will (Hugh Skinner), the stupid intern. For him going on a coffee run and trying to get back into the building can be the equivalent of some people scaling Everest, so little wonder he steals the show in the first few minutes of series two. And that's far from easy when there's such a wealth of

comedic talent, including Hugh Bonneville as Ian Fletcher (Head of Values), Jessica Hynes as Siobhan Sharpe (Head of Branding) and Jason Watkins as Simon Harwood (Director of Strategic Governance). A year after arriving at the BBC, Ian and his team are preparing for a visit by Prince Charles, while Siobhan is working on a Wimbledon coverage makeover.

FRIDAY
MasterChef
BBC1, 8.30pm
It's been seven weeks, 24 episodes, countless split sauces and sunken soufflés, and all manner of highs and lows for the finalists of the latest series of TV's toughest cookery contest, but at last we are about to be put out of our misery as the search for the country's best amateur cook reaches its climax.

Slow Train Through Africa with Griff Rhys Jones
ITV, 9pm
The comedian begins the third leg of his trip in Kasama, northern Zambia. His first stop is the town of Mpika, where he meets college students training to be locomotive drivers. Next, in the capital Lusaka, he reveals how the first railways were built to access the country's rich mineral wealth.

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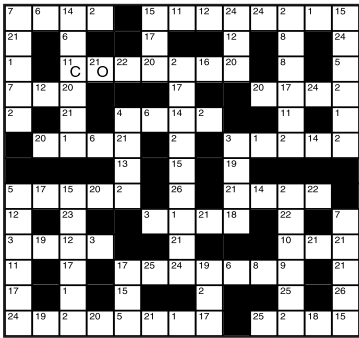
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BRAIN GYM No.321

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:



Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

Cryptic Clues:

Across

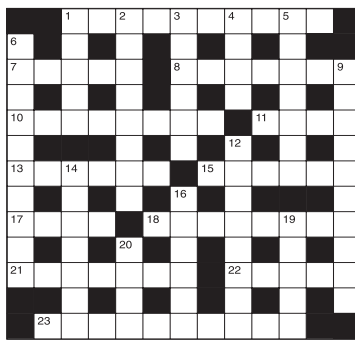
1. The farmer is married and male (10)
7. Pirate taking remainder of pot into port (5)
8. Time to relax about lie, certainly (7)
10. Almost close to source of water (4,4)
11. Prepare some unexpected items for press (4)
13. Does he gamble in reverse? (6)
15. Breeder more at the back? (6)
17. Light and tenuous? (4)
18. Not the shape of such a letter (8)
21. They fought in dark times, we hear (7)
22. Also two points to the mountains (5)
23. Fly specimen has coloured liquid container (10)

Down

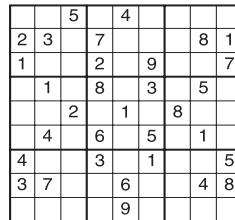
1. A bit of shovelling needed in the poor dwelling (5)
2. Strong-headed press operator can run fast (8)
3. Affirm limb dropped in beer (6)
4. Said to be a platform (4)
5. Apart, like below (7)
6. Sketch nothing unsuccessfully? (4,1,5)
9. Undertaking to get into crooked spire (10)
12. Inclination to write monotonous song (8)
14. Friendly spirit (7)
16. If rising like small company, failure results (6)
19. 50 on the rim of shelf (5)
20. Repaired hose may be in it (4)

Quick Clues:

- Across**
1. Vocation (10)
 7. Famous (5)
 8. Sharp (7)
 10. Innate (8)
 11. Stud (4)
 13. Cordial (6)
 15. Dread (6)
 17. Secure (4)
 18. Augment (8)
 21. Exalted (7)
 22. Finch (5)
 23. Again and again (10)
- Down**
1. Throw (5)
 2. Hardened (8)
 3. Swell (6)
 4. Slender (4)
 5. Open air (7)
 6. Opposite (10)
 9. Confused (10)
 12. On loan (8)
 14. Benign (7)
 16. Purpose (6)
 19. Irritate (5)
 20. Rasp (4)



Sudoku



Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

3	7	9	2	1	4	6	5	8
8	4	1	6	7	5	9	3	2
5	2	6	3	8	9	4	1	7
9	8	7	1	3	6	2	4	5
1	6	3	4	5	2	7	8	9
4	5	2	8	9	7	1	6	3
2	1	5	9	6	8	3	7	4
7	3	4	5	2	1	8	9	6
6	9	8	7	4	3	5	2	1

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 6 Pungent; 7 Firms; 9 Ice; 10 Egregious; 12 All over with; 15 Showmanship; 17 Monoplane; 19 Won; 21 Reams; 22 Sweeten. Down: 1 Punch; 2 Age; 3 Snug; 4 Lie in wait; 5 Amounts; 8 Meters; 11 Glow-worms; 13 Crally; 14 Shooter; 16 Women; 18 Newt; 20 New. QUICK - Across: 6 Disdain; 7 Dealt; 9 Hug; 10 Acquiesce; 12 Dissimulate; 15 Penetrating; 17 Contender; 19 Bet; 21 Event; 22 Against. Down: 1 Pique; 2 Odd; 3 Disc; 4 Repellent; 5 Placate; 8 Summit; 11 Diverting; 13 Spring; 14 Revolve; 16 Cease; 18 Edge; 20 Dig.

Quiz

1. Which spirit is made from the juice of an agave?
2. Which battle took place on June 18, 1815?
3. Which metal has the chemical symbol Au?
4. Who claimed to have won 'peace in our time'?
5. Which historical conflict was between the Houses of Lancaster and York?
6. Who is the patron saint of Russia?
7. Of which South African city is Soweto a suburb?
8. What was the pen name of novelist Mary Ann Evans?
9. What is the capital of Venezuela?
10. Which Sioux chief led the massacre of General Custer and his men?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Socrates; 2 Italian; 3 Dar es Salaam;

4 Mary Rose; 5 The Styx; 6 Georges

Simenon; 7 A salamander; 8 Nancy Astor; 9

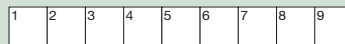
At the Alamo; 10 Edgar Allen Poe.

Niner: SUNFLOWER

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

1448 gives an animal,
82345 gives a bird,
628879 gives another bird.



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NEWBURY CLOSE, HALESOWEN



NO UPWARD CHAIN - Link detached home found in a CUL-DE-SAC position. GARAGE & driveway. In need of some general modernisation. Having 2 LARGE reception rooms & good sized kitchen. 3 bedrooms & family bathroom on 1st floor. Lawn garden with PRIVATE aspect. UPVC DG & GCH. EPC rating: TBC Ref: D1593 £209,950 Ref: D1593

GRANGE ROAD, HALESOWEN



NO UPWARD CHAIN - Ideal for modernisation & EXTENDING. Detached family home with EXTENSIVE lawn rear garden. 2 reception rooms & kitchen. 3 bedrooms & family bathroom on 1st floor. UPVC double glazing & gas central heating. EPC rating: TBC Ref: D1595 £180,000 Ref: D1595

APSLEY ROAD, OLDBURY



EXTENDED home with LARGE DRIVEWAY to front & 16ft GARAGE. Benefits from EXTENDED 34ft lounge diner & EXTENDED 12ft kitchen with separate utility room. 3 good sized bedrooms & family bathroom on 1st floor. Lawn rear garden. GCH & UPVC DG fitted. EPC rating: D Ref: D1597 £179,950 Ref: D1597

COURT OAK ROAD, HARBORNE



MODERN ground floor apartment with PRIVATE gated GARDENS & CAR PARK. Open plan lounge diner with FITTED kitchen. Master bedroom with EN-SUITE shower room. 2nd DOUBLE bedroom & family bathroom. Rear terrace with communal lawn gardens. Gas central heating & double glazing fitted. EPC rating: TBC Ref: D1594 £175,000 Ref: D1594

STANLEY ROAD, OLDBURY



EXTENDED home with GARAGE & driveway. 14ft lounge & separate 13ft dining room. EXTENDED 12ft breakfast kitchen to rear. 3 bedrooms & family bathroom on 1st floor. Gas central heating & majority UPVC double glazing. Lawn rear garden. EPC rating: E Ref: D1589 £174,950 Ref: D1589

WINDSOR ROAD, HALESOWEN



EXTENDED semi-detached home with elevated views to rear & DRIVEWAY to front. 18ft lounge diner to front & L-shaped 15ft EXTENDED breakfast kitchen to rear. REFITTED family bathroom & 3 bedrooms on first floor. Paved driveway giving off road parking. Patio & lawn garden with SUPERB views. GCH & majority double glazing fitted. EPC rating: E Ref: D1564 £147,500 Ref: D1564

PARK HILL, ROWLEY REGIS



IMMACULATE home with GARAGE in CUL-DE-SAC location with AMAZING panoramic views of Cleat & Cleve Hills to rear with sunny WESTERLY aspect. REFITTED kitchen with appliances & 14ft lounge diner. 3 bedrooms & family bathroom on 1st floor. UPVC double glazing & economy 7 heating fitted. EPC rating: E Ref: D1601 £143,000 Ref: D1601

LUDFORD ROAD, BARTLEY GREEN



NO UPWARD CHAIN - well presented home with DRIVEWAY to front giving off road parking. REFITTED kitchen, 22ft lounge diner & side veranda. 3 bedrooms & family bathroom with white suite. Lawn gardens to front & rear. GCH & UPVC DG. The property is of none standard construction & is part concrete build. EPC rating: C Ref: D1600 £104,950 Ref: D1600

SLATCH HOUSE RD, SMETHWICK



NO CHAIN - Semi-detached home in need of some modernisation having 15ft lounge & 14ft kitchen diner. Benefits from d/s WC. 3 good size bedrooms ALL with fitted wardrobes & family bathroom on 1st floor. UPVC DG & GCH fitted. Front & rear gardens, CUL-DE-SAC position. EPC rating: E Ref: D1596 £99,995 Ref: D1596

LONG LANE, HALESOWEN



WELL PRESENTED traditional terrace benefitting from 2 DOUBLE bedrooms & upstairs bathroom. 2 reception rooms, lobby, & EXTENDED breakfast kitchen. Majority UPVC double glazing & gas central heating. Cottage style rear garden. EPC rating: E Ref: D1592 £94,950 Ref: D1592

COOMBS ROAD, HALESOWEN



NO UPWARD CHAIN - 1st floor maisonette with PARKING to rear. 14ft lounge with WESTERLY views to rear, with kitchen to front. 2 DOUBLE bedrooms & fitted shower room. 13ft ATTIC room with velux windows & WC. Communal lawn gardens to rear. 99 year lease from June 1986. EPC rating: D Ref: D1570 £94,950 Ref: D1570

LONG LANE, HALESOWEN



NO CHAIN - REFURBISHED ground floor apartment with PARKING to rear. REFITTED kitchen with double doors leading to 12ft lounge with MODERN fittings. REFITTED bathroom with white suite & LED downlights. DOUBLE bedroom with built in wardrobes. UPVC double glazing & electric heating. Communal lawn gardens. EPC rating: E Ref: D1573 £70,000 Ref: d1573

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QUINTON | £239,950

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Price is right for package that's well put together

By Bill McCarthy

As the name Great Wall Motors Company implies, it is a Chinese vehicle manufacturer and still pretty anonymous outside its homeland.

That became apparent when anyone inspecting the Steed asked: "What is it?"

Great Wall is one of China's largest automotive manufacturers and with the launch of the Steed pick-up in 2012, it became the first manufacturer from that country to commence volume vehicle sales in the United Kingdom.

Revamped for 2015, it offers the cheapest pick-up vehicle on the market in the UK, with plenty on offer for a bargain basement £14,998 as a commercial vehicle on the road price (CVOTR).

It also comes with a six-year, 120,000 mile warranty reasonable running costs. It must be half-decent, a million have been sold worldwide.

Despite being a pick-up workhorse, it does not lack in the looks area, despite its boxy, out of necessity, appearance. It looks upmarket with the stylish paintwork, high set headlamps, a deep grille and air scoop, built-in driving lights built into the bumpers giving it an individual look, as does the never-recognised Great Wall badge.

Just like many of its competitors, it is designed to be as much a 'life-style' kind of vehicle as an off-road all-wheel drive workhorse/load lugger. So it can ferry the family's wet and muddy paraphernalia or pets around as well as lugging bricks, building materials or farm equipment with its one-tonne payload.

For family use, fixing some nets and stays in the load area would be a good idea to stop stuff flying around, while access is through the hard top is via a rear window and a heavy drop down tailgate, which is robust enough to be stood on.

The firm says it has been designed to meet European safety standards and with a price which seriously undercuts the opposition.

You would think with a bargain basement price, it would be bargain basement quality, but the big vehicle proved surprisingly well put together, generously equipped and performed very well.

Flexible

The double cab is well laid out, if looking more dated than the exterior, with leather finish and logically placed buttons, dials and stalks. Some of the fixtures and fittings however, do not match the quality of some of its more established rivals.

Powered by a flexible and torquey 140bhp two-litre diesel engine, mated to a slightly vague, six-speed gearbox, it is a willing worker, if a bit raucous under acceleration. It is reasonably economical and is pretty cheap to insure as well. Claimed economy is 32.8mpg with CO2 emissions competitive at 222g/km.

Braked towing capacity is decent, if not class leading with 2.5 tonne capacity available.

On the road, the car rides reasonably comfortably, although it gets jiggly over rougher roads and responds well to the steering wheel. A long, 100-mile drive proved surprisingly pleasant given the hard suspension.

Switching to off-road is done manually with both high and low ratio four-wheel drive available.

The S entry model includes 16" alloy wheels, a leather interior, individually heated seats, Alpine CD/USB/RDS Radio and electric windows throughout. The Steed SE tested here has a £2k premium and adds gets the body-coloured hard top canopy, rear parking sensors, a cargo load-liner and chrome sidebars as well the the useful running boards and roof bars.

All models come with twin airbags, an anti-lock braking system and electronic brake force distribution for added protection.

Lack of a large network of dealers is a drawback, but it is cheap to buy, economical to run, well equipped and stylish, plus that six-year warranty.

What's not to like?

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Great Wall Steed SE 2.0 TDI

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Max speed: 87mph

Payload: 1.050 tonnes

Towing: 2.5 tonnes

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Insurance group: 88

CO2 emissions: 222g/km



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Jeep is ready to compete

By Ian Donaldson

Jeep might be famous the world over for building cars that will climb mountains, but the brand is digging itself out of a pit that could have seen it sink into obscurity.

In Europe at least, where a Jeep spokesman admitted, as the latest model – the Renegade – was launched, “back in 2012 we were teetering on the edge.”

Dealers were losing an average of more than £130,000 a year and lots of them jumped ship, heading for brands that might make them a decent living. Things, in short, could not have looked bleaker.

Well, what a difference three years can make. The car you are reading about today is not only the first Jeep to be built outside the United States (in Italy, actually) it is also confidently expected to quickly become by far the best selling Jeep in the UK, making dealers very happy indeed.

Built in the same Italian plant as the Fiat 500X and sharing important bits like engines and gearboxes, the Renegade is aimed squarely at the likes of the Nissan Juke and Mini Countryman; both cars that attract a fanatical following of owners happy to pay a solid price for a car that makes them feel good about themselves.

They inhabit a part of the car market (for smaller SUVs) that is expanding faster than a politician's election promises, as European buyers fall for the charms of cars that look a lot like unaffordable and wilderness conquering 4x4s but really cost little more to run than a family hatchback.

Credibility

The Jeep Renegade will do a fair impression of an Everest hero, even if its target audience – politely called “the young at heart” – never venture further off road than the field at the local car boot sale. Why, a fifth of buyers are expected to lease a car with their mobility allowance and most Renegades won't even be all-wheel drive.

What they all have, Jeep must hope, is a name that carries decades of credibility among people hankering after daily transport that rises above the merely practical.

With prices starting at £16,995 for a decently equipped 1.6 litre petrol model with air con, DAB radio, Bluetooth and alloy wheels, the Renegade looks convincing even before you turn the key in the ignition.

There are diesels to choose from too (Jeep thinks there might be an even-ish split on types of fuel) and four trim levels, all the way to the £27,995 Limited with 2.0 litre diesel engine, all-wheel drive and nine-speed automatic gearbox.

Most will hardly venture off road, but bold owners who opt for the 4x4 models will discover a car capable of taking a quite demanding series of hills and hollows, and a seashore being washed by an incoming tide, if they choose the route of the press drive for the newcomer, on the east coast of Scotland around North Berwick.

They might be more surprised (after all, Jeep is never backward in coming forward about the brand's off-road prowess) is the way the Renegade tackles a British side road; the heavier diesel in particular impressing with its gentle, quiet progress.

The 2.0 litre on test managed 39mpg (the notably slower but cheaper 1.4 litre petrol did 33mpg) and never felt lacking for power. It also presented an interior different enough to be interesting and just the right side of kitsch, with its little tributes to Jeep's heritage dotted about – 31 of them all told, from a red line on the rev counter marked like a smear of mud, to a tiny WWII Jeep outline on the windscreen surround.

The top ranking Renegade impressed. Here is a car to give the equally style conscious Nissan Juke a run for its money.



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silver, 62,000 miles, 12 months
MOT, very good condition, £1,450
ono. 07772 007913.
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Sport. 2004. 5 door, black,
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£895. 07851 213316.
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miles, silver, electric windows, air
con, fsh, MOT, alloy wheels, leather
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lent runner, MOT, £350.
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o.n.o. 07966 29135 after 6.30pm.
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bodykit needs attention, 12 months
MOT. Telephone 07949 173226.
VAUXHALL VECTRA Club, reg. 1.8.
petrol, 02 reg, 5-dr hatch, full MOT,
77k, EW, Radio CD, part service
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turn to page 34

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Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 259 Stourbridge Road Halesowen West Midlands B63 3QU, who died on 07/03/2015, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 26/06/2015, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.
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195 High Street Cradley Heath
West Midlands B64 5HW T438251

MARIE MAUD FELLOWS (Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of Valley Court Valley Road Cradley Heath West Midlands B64 7LT, who died on 01/02/2015, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 17/06/2015, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.
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TERENCE BRIDGEWATER (Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 29 Mogul Lane Halesowen West Midlands B63 2QG, who died on 14/11/2014, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned on or before 26/06/2015, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.
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10 Personals

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MALE 59

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MALE MID 60'S

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WLTm, kind, honest man, 60's to 70's, to share life's good things together. Wolverhampton, West Midlands area

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WEALTHY GENT 60's

Widower, own house and car. WLTm Lady for relationship, day trips our holidays abroad and maybe more.

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sports clubs

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WANTED
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WIDOW LATE 60'S

WLTm, kind, honest man, 60's to 70's, to share life's good things together. Wolverhampton, West Midlands area

Box Number C19767,
Express and Star,
Queen Street,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

WEALTHY GENT 60's

Widower, own house and car. WLTm Lady for relationship, day trips our holidays abroad and maybe more.

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During the flight the cabin lights will be dimmed and passengers will be required to rotate seats regularly so that everyone will have a window seat at various times.

The Northern Lights may appear as simply a vague glow in the sky, or as a curtaining effect consisting of parallel rays, often enhanced by folds called 'striations'. The colours seen are mainly green, with rarer occurrences of red and blue.

Please note the Northern Lights are a natural phenomenon, which cannot be guaranteed to appear during the flight, although they have been visible on many previous outings.

INFO

- Pre-flight illustrated presentation by a guest astronomer
- Flight in search of the Northern Lights
- Services of an astronomer on board
- Light refreshments on board
- Services of a tour manager

Organised by Omega Holidays (ABTA V4782, ATOL6081)

Pick of the week

Buckingham Palace

Day trip departing August 9



PRICE FROM £59

- Return coach travel
- Entrance to Buckingham Palace

Two and four-day trips to Buckingham Palace are also available

Book by May 2 and receive 10% discount - telephone bookings only

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

Emmerdale Country and the Best of Yorkshire

Three days departing June 19, Sept 25



PRICE FROM £169

- Return coach travel
- Two nights half-board accommodation
- Tours of 'Last of the Summer Wine' country and a visit to Holmfirth
- Tours of 'Emmerdale' country and the Yorkshire Dales
- Visit to York
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Newmarket Holidays (ABTA V787X)

Space Spectacular at the Royal Albert Hall

Two days departing June 20



PRICE FROM £129

- Return coach travel
- Overnight bed and breakfast accommodation
- Choir seat in the Royal Albert Hall (*ticket upgrades offered*)
- Sightseeing tour of London or time to shop and sightsee
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Newmarket Holidays (ABTA V787X)

Hampton Court Palace

Two days departing June 20



PRICE FROM £119

- Return coach travel
- Overnight half-board accommodation
- Entrance to Hampton Court Palace and Gardens
- Visit to Royal Greenwich
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Book by May 2 and receive 10% discount - telephone bookings only

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

Royal Ascot on Ladies Day

Day trip departing June 18



PRICE FROM £89.⁹⁵

- Return coach travel
- Brunch-time full English breakfast with a glass of sparkling wine
- Admission to the Silver Ring enclosure on Ladies Day (*ticket upgrade offered*)
- Services of a coach driver/tour representative

Organised by Omega Holidays (ABTA V4782)

Call the Midwife

Two days departing July 25 and October 3



PRICE FROM £125

- Return coach travel
- Overnight bed and breakfast accommodation
- Visit to Canterbury
- Visit with entrance to London's Historic Dockyard in Chatham, including a 90-minute Call the Midwife walking tour
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability

Organised by Newmarket Holidays (ABTA V787X)

Chelsea Flower Show and Windsor

Two days departing May 22



PRICE FROM £179.⁹⁵

- Return coach travel
- Overnight half-board accommodation
- Admission to the Chelsea Flower Show
- Visit to Windsor
- Services of a coach driver/tour representative
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Omega Events (ABTA Y590X)

Kew Gardens Tree Tops Walk and Hampton Court

Two days departing June 20



PRICE FROM £139

- Return coach travel
- Overnight half-board accommodation
- Visit to Kew Gardens and Rhizotron and Xstrata Treemap walkway
- Entrance to Hampton Court Palace, Gardens and Maze
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Book by May 2 and receive 10% discount - telephone bookings only

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

Bruges by Eurostar

Four days various departure dates



PRICE FROM £289

- Return standard class seat on Eurostar
 - Return rail connection to London
 - Return coach transfers overseas
 - Three nights bed and breakfast accommodation
 - Guided walking tour of Bruges
 - Visit to a traditional chocolate maker
 - Visit to Ypres and the First World War battlefields
 - Services of a tour manager
 - Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies
- Certain entrance fees payable locally*

Organised by Riviera Travel (ABTA V4744)

Disneyland® Paris

Four days departing
June 14, September 13, October 11



PRICE FROM £325*

- Return coach travel and Channel crossings
- Three nights bed and breakfast accommodation at Disney's® Hotel Santa Fe
- Two day hopper ticket to both Disneyland® Park and Walt Disney Studios® Park
- Services of a tour representative

**Based on two adults sharing, children aged 3-11 from £159 (conditions apply)*

Please note this trip cannot be booked online

Organised by Newmarket Promotions (ABTA V787X)

Pompeii, Capri and the Bay of Naples

Eight days various departure dates



PRICE FROM £829

- Return flights
- Seven nights half-board accommodation in Sorrento
- Guided tours of Pompeii, Sorrento and the Naples Archaeological Museum
- Visits to Vesuvius and Ravello
- Tour of the Amalfi Coast
- Cruise to Capri
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Riviera Travel (ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430)





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SUSAN 44, stunning curvy blonde, fit and active, seeks happy go lucky male for good conversation, fun times, maybe more. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416801

STELLA 50, gorgeous, voluptuous and all woman seeks sensual older male, who knows just what he wants for lots of naughty fun and TLC. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416707

STELLA 50, gorgeous, voluptuous and all woman seeks sensual older male, who knows just what he wants for lots of naughty fun and TLC. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416707

PAULA 40, sensual, young at heart brunette looking for some fun and romance with a tall outgoing male. Call if you feel the same. ACA Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416681

VAL 41, pretty, cuddly, fiery, seeks similar fun loving male for an uncomplicated no strings relationship. Age/looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416601

EILEEN 49, lovely brunette, adventurous and eager to please seeks intelligent male to share the fun side of life together. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416521

CHRISTINE 48, shy sensitive brunette looking for lively older male to make her smile again and bring back some passion, s Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416519

BEAUTIFUL full figured, down to earth black woman, 37, looking for some serious fun with an experienced, confident, older guy. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416499

SINCERE lady, seeks similar gent, widower preferred, 60-67, 5ft 6ins, so slightly taller than me, N/S, car owner and likes a dog. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416471

PRETTY slim female, 48, N/S, no ties, seeks tall, slim level headed male for initial friendship and evenings out. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416727

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. Tel No: 0905 002 1883 Box No: 413399

THELMA, 43, attractive blonde, seeks loving, honest, funny male to pamper and make happy. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416979

ADVENTUROUS sexy lady, 38yrs, married but seeks no strings fun with discreet man, any area, I'm tall, slim and dominant. Aca. Tel No: 0905 002 1937 Box No: 415301

DAWN attractive, easygoing, and dazzling, WLTm well built mature male for fun loving no strings romance. Status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416917

MID naughty forties female looking fun, thrills and discreet meets, give me a call, you will be disappointed. Any age with own accommodation. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409109

ANNE, mid 40's, cheerful busty curvy affectionate real woman! Seeking a nice guy who looks for nights at home. Tel No: 0905 002 1953 Box No: 410291

KAREN medium build, blonde hair, 5ft 5ins, seeks male, 50-58, GSOH, loving, caring and understanding. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415429

DISCREET lady, 42yrs wants to make you happy, come to me and let me do that for you. ACA. Tel No: 0905 002 1957 Box No: 409091

KAREN 5ft 5ins, blonde hair, blue eyes, slim, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416337

TARA, confident lady, long legs, long hair, seeks a saucy man of any age for daytime, no strings fun. Tel No: 0905 002 1913 Box No: 414701

MARIA gorgeous leggy blonde seeks tall professional male for fun nights out, cosy nights in with plenty of TLC and romance. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416661

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PAT 5ft 2ins, medium build, attractive, blonde hair, widow, seeking N/S, sincere gent for friendship and days out. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416057

ALICE 36, tall and slim with long brown hair, outgoing and sporty seeks funny, intelligent guy to share active days and cosy nights. Age/looks not important. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416087

DIANE 37, sensual, tactile and loving seeks tall male for interesting conversations and cosy intimate nights together. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416085

BRIDGET 48, voluptuous, seductive and very saucy, seeks male for lots of TLC and to make very happy in return. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416083

ATTRACTIVE tall, dark, professional gent, GSOH, likes sports, socialising, good company, seeking female with GSOH for laughs, conversation and maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415969

ATTRACTIVE professional widow, 73, WLTm sincere caring gent, widower for friendship, meals in, conversation and to put a smile on our faces. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415969

KAREN 5ft 5ins, blonde hair, blue eyes, slim, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416337

JUNE 50, beautiful, funny, warm, young looking blonde WLTm attractive down to earth male for no strings fun, laughter and love. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416299

SHELLY 36, tiny shy brunette seeks down to earth, sensitive, older male to snuggle up, share a bottle of wine with and pamper. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416235

KATHERINE 33, pretty blonde would love to get intimate with outgoing, fit guy who is also looking for fun relationship with no strings. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416197

FEMALE fun brunette, attractive, 26, seeking male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416287



ASIA very attractive slim single black 32yr female looking for fun times with god time guy with GSOH and a real passion for life and falling in love. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415837

SARAH 31yrs looking for casual 1-2-1 no strings fun with broadminded bored male Status unimportant, discretion and mutual respect essential. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415821

LINDA uncomplicated female who loves the simple things in life, looking for N/S male with GSOH for nights in/out, no games, users or time wasters please. s Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415535

KAREN 50, widow, 5ft 5ins, blonde hair, blue eyes, slim, seeks gent with GSOH, loving, caring and understanding. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415871

GWEN middle aged, 65-75, 5ft 2ins, likes theatre, country music, holidays, seeks N/S male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415785

HOME alone far too often, attractive bubbly fun good time girl 32yrs seeking male 30-50yrs for broadminded daytime fun. Let's rid the boredom! Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415523

SUE attractive, independent, confident female, sporty, petite, loves the Arts, good books, looking for romantic, sensitive nice guy for nice times together. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415501

KAREN medium build, blonde hair, 5ft 5ins, seeks male, 50-58, GSOH, loving, caring and understanding. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415429

AMANDA 5ft 4ins slim fit attractive, enjoys the outdoors, nice wine, theatre etc, seeking romantic considerate soul mate to broaden my horizons. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415391

SAM attractive single mum who really enjoys life and likes to be happy WLTm genuine single maledad for mutual companionship, dates in/out and tic. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415381

KAREN medium build, blonde hair, 5ft 5ins, seeks male, 50-58, GSOH, loving, caring and understanding. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415429

23YR old Asian female, seeks sugar daddy, any age for fun and much more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415367

PATRICIA widow 67, likes simple pleasures in life, seeks gent, N/S for friendship/companionship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415685

KAREN 50, widow, blonde hair, GSOH, 5ft 5ins, slim, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415767

GEM 34yr old pretty brunette with lovely big eyes and nice skin, many interests, WLTm kind tallish male, 30-50yrs for serious relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415571

SYLVIA attractive blonde size 12 45yr old female looking for genuine companionship, someone to spend quality times with, enjoy music and cosy times together. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415543

BUBBLY larger than life 28yr old blonde bombshell, seeks large built male to fulfil every fantasy! Give me a call: I will totally make your day maybe even your year. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 414977

BARBARA 38 slim sporty attractive blonde, varied interests, single and ready to date, seeks kind honest guy for shared interests, fun nights out, hopefully leading more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 414967

JULIE single petite attractive big blue eyed brunette, loves cooking a cosy meal in, nights out, searching for a real love with genuinely nice guy. Looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 414491

GOOD looking professional lady, 56, enjoys the arts, country walks, meals out, seeks compatible, genuine, professional gent to enjoy the good things in life. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415007

ANGIE 38yrs slim blonde, ex model with lovely long legs with shapely figure, fit, toned, sporty, confident but warm, WLTm similar perceptive, sensitive individual for tir. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 414723

BECKY stunning big blue eyed 38yr old honest, caring and fun person looking for nice times with similar outgoing fun guy status/age unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 414391

68YR old widow, attractive, seeks sincere, N/S male, likes reading, meals out and walks. West Midlands. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 414773

NICOLA 32, blue eyes, petite, pretty brunette, shy at first, trustworthy, caring, varied hobbies, seeks male/single dad up to 40yrs for tic possible tir. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 414707

KAREN petite 34yr old attractive blonde, likes pubs, clubs, meals out, gym, looking for honest caring guy who can make me laugh. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 414373

ANN looking for no strings adult fun, broadminded and great fun, blonde, attractive and discreet. Call me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 414363

JANE 5ft5ins blue eyed attractive curvy mature student with happy disposition, enjoys meals or drinks in/out, keeping fit, walking, seeking genuine fun male with GSOH. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 414229

ARE you Mr Wonderful? Lesley attractive slim adult haired fit lady who loves life and fully intends to live it to the full, seeking similar caring, patient man. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 414213

KATY 26 slim beautiful discreet blue eyed blonde looking for mature gent for some uncomplicated fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 414209

ANNABELLE 29 slim talented beautiful sophisticated sensual brunette, loves the high life, Champagne lunches, weekends away, seeks very own sugar daddy for sweet nothings. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 414191

SARAH 38yr old bored blonde seeking single guys up for some good times, chats and discreet meets. Looking forward to hearing from you. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 414177

EMS 32yrs petite young looking, pretty, likes swimming, walking, talking etc, seeking honest bloke or dad up to 40yrs for fun adult friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413893

NATALIE 22yrs attractive brunette nurse, very slim, athletic figure, many likes, few dislikes, WLTm male up to 38yrs to stay at home and have some fun with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413839

MAZ 36 petite curvy big blue eyes, loves music, beach walks, cosy nights with good conversation and nice wine, seeks similar likeminded male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413571

ANN slim attractive widowed but not past being loved lady, loves travel, country good conversation, WLTm kind genuine male, 35-65 for tir. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413453

JANET tall beautiful brunette, slim 12 separated, enjoys life, no hang-ups, wanting quality time, friendship and possible romance with similar guy. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413415

ANITA seeking nice man in the West Midlands, 50-70 for companionship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413765

KAREN 50, widow, likes swimming, horse riding, keep fit, clay pigeon shooting, GSOH, N/S, non drinker, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415211

EMMA petite slim blue eyed blonde 22yrs, likes cinema, dancing/music, just chillin, seeking easygoing male for fun and good times but nothing serious. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413207

EUROPEAN beauty romantic, caring, attentive, looking for loving male to enjoy warm loving relationship with, call me to find out more. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413013

KAREN 34 blue/green eyed size 12 attractive brunette who loves pubs, cosy nights in, kids, seeking special honest guy/dad for poss tir. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413005

ROSA 27 sexy senorita seeking older handsome prince charming to whisk me off my feet, enjoy fun times, improve my English and fall in love with, Age/race unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412927

RITA attractive blonde with a very kind heart seeks special man to share my life with. Please get in touch if like me you are fed up with always being the single friend. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412987

JAN 5ft8ins slim pretty lady in great shape, open-minded, laidback, GSOH, OHAC, many interests, WLTm someone for cuddling up and to share good and bad times. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412931

ANN slim attractive N/S lady who is easy to get along with, looking for romantic interesting man for new adventures together, hopefully tir. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412911

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TALL, dark, attractive guy, 48, seeks attractive, younger female for fun times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 316752

34YR old slim, dark haired, creative, adventurous, likes music, cycling and photography, seeks likeminded female to share fun and happiness with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 352753

MARCUS 46, 5ft 7ins, medium build, blond hair, seeking female for fun and friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416887

JULIE loving, caring, honest, seeks real vent to share conversation and have a great time. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412777

SALLY stunning lady looking for dinner dates, partying and generally having a good time with generous man looking for his mojo! No strings, go on call me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412599

DEBS petite attractive auburn haired, good listener, romantic, enjoys socialising, cosy nights in with Mr Right, seeking similar caring N/S single dad. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412387

JAN slim curvy professional woman, affectionate, looking to fill full time vacancy with similar male who loves cuddles/kisses and bikes for romance. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412167

ATTRACTIVE slim brunette, 47, N/S, seeks tall, slim male for a cut above the average relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411893

KAREN pretty blonde, short in stature, big personality, keeps fit, loves dogs, seeking honest, caring male who can make me laugh. Nothing too serious just fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412377

JEAN petite female who enjoys golf, days out, cosy evenings in, holidays, WLTm older male in his 60's with a good personality and big heart. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412359

JULIE really fun loving slim pretty female 38 looking for nice guy to go out with, get to know and hopefully enjoy a relationship with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411517

GWENDOLINE honest, trustworthy, seeks caring gent who enjoys cinema, theatre, holidays and nights out for friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412293

SONYA slim attractive vibrant lady with GSOH, social nature, fit/active, WLTm N/S male up to 60yrs for romantic genuine respectful relationship, loving. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413441

EMMA petite slim blue eyed blonde 22yrs, likes cinema, dancing/music, just chillin, seeking easygoing male for fun and good times but nothing serious. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413207

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TALL, dark, attractive guy, 48, seeks attractive female for no strings fun times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 299904

ATTRACTIVE male, late 40s, seeks attractive female for fun times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 317113

TALL, dark, attractive guy 50, seeks tall, reliable, tactile, seeks fun, N/S lady for friendship and more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 314219

SHROPSHIRE male, 50, tall, dark, attractive, fun loving, seeks attractive



Well-earned away point for the Yeltz

HALESOWEN got a well-earned point with a 1-1 draw at Ramsbottom to keep them in the middle of the Evo-Stik Northern Premier League.

It could have been more had they held out to a fifth-minute lead given them by Joe Hull who scored from close range after good build-up play by Iyseden Christie.

Halesowen keeper Matthew Sargeant made some fine saves but could do nothing about Matthew Burke's deflected shot on the hour.

Meanwhile, champions Sporting Khalsa warmed up for the Staffordshire Vase Final against Lichfield with a 3-0 win over Black Country Rangers.

The victory takes them through the 100-point barrier in the West Midlands Premier.

They now lead second-placed Bridgnorth by 15 points and still have three games in hand.

Without a recognised keeper, Rangers put striker Josef Jakob between the sticks and his uncertainty showed when Mensah Kinch's routine shot crept through his hands and into the net on 17 minutes.

Khalsa finally grabbed the second on 37 minutes, a mix-up in the Rangers defence allowing an unmarked Brad Lawley to finish from four yards.

The second period was a flat affair, a routine header by Williams from Campbell's cross on 54 minutes easily taken by Jakob and Ross Miller having Rangers' best chance on the hour.

The champions claimed their third on 69 minutes when substitute Chris Rabone was brought down in the area and Campbell slotted home the penalty to grab the goal his performance deserved.

Chance to take on darts ace Bristow in hotel appearance

DARTS legend Eric Bristow, the man known as 'Crafty Cockney' is coming to Brierley Hill in June.

He will appear at the Copthorne Hotel on Thursday, June 18 for an evening with a difference where the audience will be up close and personal with the legendary five-times world champion.

Bristow will also be telling stories about his career and life in general in a night hosted by fellow Sky Sports darts commentator Nigel Pearson.

Bristow said: "Darts is going global these days and I'm proud to still be a part of it."

There will be a draw for some members of the audience to play Bristow in a leg of darts followed by the Q&A. A meal is also included in the ticket price.

Standard tickets are priced at £30 and gold tickets, which include priority seating and a dedicated signed picture with Bristow, are £50. There will also be an auction and raffle with a donation to Compton Hospice.

Tickets are available at www.sportstakevents.co.uk or on 01902 244220. The event is sponsored by Clement Keys Chartered Accountants.

Glassboys let a two-goal lead slip

Stourbridge 2 Marine 2

STOURBRIDGE'S poor form continued as they relinquished a two-goal lead against lowly Marine at Amblecote.

After a tight first half, the Glassboys scored twice in quick succession through Drew Canavan and Chris Lait before a Lewis Codling brace meant Gary Hackett's side have now gone six games without victory, writes Lewis Cox.

Stour got off to a decent start in this Evo-Stik Northern Premier game as they looked to put the derby defeat to Halesowen behind them; the lively Josh Morgan-Parker's goalbound strike hit a Ma-

Football

rine hand before visiting stopper Matthew Cooper did well to deny Junior Smikle.

Kayelden Brown went close after 20 minutes, heading a Luke Connolly cross wide.

But the Merseysiders, fighting hard against relegation with only one defeat in the last seven, improved and went close as Lewis Solly tipped over Jamie Menagh's dangerous cross.

Liam Willis thumped in a header from the resulting corner but Canavan cleared off the line.

The mood was lifted at the War Memorial 12

minutes into the second half as Canavan and Lait combined brilliantly for the former to drill his shot beyond Cooper. Two minutes later the lead was doubled as Smikle's fine low cross from the right was prodded home by Lait.

Stranded

But Marine were instantly back in it as Codling's spectacular effort from 30 yards flew in over a stranded Solly. And the points were shared when the impressive Marine wideman picked the ball up on the halfway line before striding through and finishing well.

HALES AVENGE HINCKLEY LOSS

Old Halesonians 17 Hinckley 10

IN their penultimate league game, Hales sought to avenge the heavy loss earlier in the season having travelled with a weakened side.

Hinckley were favourites, needing to win to ensure a play-off position for promotion to National 2.

Hales kicked off and immediate pressure saw Chris Hooper convert an early penalty for a 3-0 lead. After 18 minutes Hales won a scrum on half-way. Scrum half Nathan Jones picked up, passed to the charging Carl Robinson who once again found a gap to slice through and sell a dummy to the full back for a great try, converted by Hooper.

Hinckley, the bigger side, were unable to take control. But following a period of pressure from the visitors, the referee penalised Hales front row Matt Young on 38 minutes with a yellow card which reduced the home side to 14 players. Hinckley took advantage and managed to force their way over for a try in the corner.

Advantage

The referee then appeared to lose the plot after the interval by giving a yellow card to replacement prop Chris Deeks, again Hales down to 14 men, Hinckley again took advantage of the extra man and scored a pushover try to level the scores.

It looked as though Hinckley would take control but Hooper sprinted clear for a late try, and converted at the whistle.

On Saturday Old Hales firsts meet Lichfield away in their final league game, kick off 3pm. They meet Whitchurch RFC in the final of the North Midlands Cup at Dudley Kingswinford ground on Sunday May 10.

DK went down 87-24 at Peterborough.

Stourbridge 21 Hull Ionians 42

IONIANS demonstrated why they are champions-elect of National 2 North, their pack making it difficult for the hosts who struggled to contain tighthead Steve Johnson at the scrum.

Stour were still in the game on the hour mark, Gary Dipple's try bringing them within a score, but Ionians finished the game off clinically, their six tries including two pushovers and a penalty try. Early penalty concessions gave Ionians prime



Carl Robinson powers through on the attack for Old Hales

field position and Stour old boy Chris Reakes took advantage of a midfield defensive misunderstanding to touch down unchanged behind the posts.

Caolan Ryan hit back with three penalties to give Stour a 9-7 lead.

Ionians' backfield struggled to secure a Dipple kick ahead, the clearance charged down by the chasing Depper but the bounce favoured the defender and Ionians cleared. Their outside half then found a gap in the Stour first up defences,

the cover just about held them out but at the cost of a penalty. Ionians opted to scrum and forced a pushover try. Ionians ran an early second half penalty before their flanker then breezed through

under the posts. The penalty count continued to climb as the game briefly reached stalemate before a penalty award to the visitors was reversed for foul play. Stour kicked for touch, Robbie Hurrell caught and drove, Shillingford's run straightened the angle and a neat offload put Dipple through to outgas the cover.

Ionians were rewarded with a try under the posts then a penalty try added to their advantage.

The next scrum drew a further penalty that saw Mark George despatched to the sin bin, Ionians scoring from a catch and drive against the depleted Stour pack, sub Ash Oyekan blasting his way through four tiring would-be tacklers.

Irrepressible Singh grabs all four goals

Tipton Tn 4 Shepherd Dynamo 4

TIPTON Town hotshot Gurjit Singh bagged all four goals – including a last-minute equaliser – in an eight-goal Midlands Premier thriller.

It was seen as a 'must-win' game for the Black Country side as they entered the closing stages of the campaign to preserve their Premiership status.

Singh, whose rapid rise has landed him on the books at Conference side Kidderminster Harriers, was deadly in front of goal and also set up Adam Hill to hit the bar.

Shepshed had started positively, but Singh gave the visitors the lead.

The hot shot had already flashed a rising drive just over when he collected an 18th-minute pass, turned Shepshed defender Liam Lescott and finished strongly across keeper Liam Mitchell.

Rob Wall levelled on 34 minutes as the host's pressure told. But just before the hour mark Singh struck again. He brought down a crossfield pass from Dave Bate, jinked past Lescott and fired past the helpless Mitchell.

Yet the lead lasted just two minutes as Dave Hind scored a fine goal in this topsy-turvy clash.

There were no more goals until the last 20 minutes, and even then it looked like the hosts would take the spoils.

Singh completed his hat-trick in the 71st minute, outpacing the visitors' defence before sending Mitchell the wrong way.

Steve Towers equalised and Rob Morgan gleefully stabbed home what looked like an 88th-minute winner for the Leicester-based outfit. But they reckoned without the irrepressible Singh, who in the last minute danced through and planted his shot beyond Mitchell.

Villa owner Lerner set for Wembley

VILLA owner Randy Lerner is poised to make a rare public appearance for Sunday's FA Cup semi-final at Wembley.

Reclusive Lerner has rarely been seen at Villa Park in recent seasons but is scheduled to fly in to watch Tim Sherwood's side take on Liverpool in the last four, in what could be one of his last games as chairman.

The American owner remains keen to sell the club and talks are reported to be continuing over a £150m sale.

Lerner last attended a game at Villa Park last September. That was his first home game since December 2012.

Villa edged closer to safety with a 1-0 win over Tottenham last weekend.

★★★

The Chronicle, a Midlands News Association Ltd publication, printed by the company at Ketterley, Telford. Thursday, April 16, 2015



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